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[THE STRANGE YOUTH.]

## FICKLE FORTUNE.

By the Author of "Maurice Durant," etc.

### CHAPTER XIV.

Worldly men have miserable, mad, mistaking eyes.

Oh, what may man within him hide  
Though angel on the outward side!

We, ignorant of ourselves,  
Beg often our own harms.

Measure for Measure.

Troilus.

GRACE gained the house, and, panting as if still pursued, bounded silently up the stairs.

Her room adjoined the squire's; opposite it was the sealed one of Hugh's, and on the other side the apartments reserved for Captain Dartmouth.

The squire's was in the centre, between Grace's and Reginald's.

Locking the door, she threw herself into a low chair and hid her face in her hands.

What was she to do?

Go to the squire and ask him for protection?

Protection was a strong word, but not a whit too strong, for Grace looked upon the captain's soft speeches and counterfeit love glances as nothing less than an attack.

She rose presently, and removing her hat flung it on the bed, and then went to the glass to re-arrange her hair, that, always ready to fall down and tumble, had seized her sharp run for a pretext and was falling in a dark mass upon her shoulders.

She could see that her face was white, and, for the first time in her life, she felt afraid.

But she knitted her dark brows, and, struggling against the feeling, proceeded to the squire's room.

Just as her hand touched the handle of the door Captain Reginald's door opened, and Grace had only time to dart back into her own room before he came lounging out.

She waited a moment, thinking he would go downstairs, but to her surprise and consternation he came towards her, and, stopping at the squire's room, knocked and said:

"Can I come in, sir?"

"Yes," said the squire's short voice, and Grace saw Reginald Dartmouth open the door quietly, enter, and close it after him.

Instantly a fear seized upon her young, distrustful heart.

"He has gone to tell Uncle Harry before I can!" and her passionate, fiery soul rebelled and grew hot at the thought.

She glared at the door with vengeful eyes, and stamped her foot upon the thick mat.

"Oh, if I could but hear what he says!" she murmured, and then, as a sudden idea flashed across her mind, she flew back into her room, and, locking the door again, stole on tiptoe to a cupboard that was let into the wall which divided her room from the squire's.

Carefully opening the door so that they might not hear her, she stepped in and laid her ear against the partition.

For a moment the beating of her heart seemed to drown the voices, but as she gained confidence she could hear distinctly, and, with a dark, indignant face, drank in every word.

"Don't say that, sir," Reginald Dartmouth was saying, as if in answer to some remark of the squire's. "Rather than being bored I shall enjoy a quiet chat. I should have come up before, but was afraid of disturbing you."

"Oh, you won't disturb me," replied the squire, with a groan and a sigh, that could be heard as plainly as his words. "This keeps me awake enough without anything else."

"It must be very wearying," said the captain, pityingly.

"It be, it be," said the squire. "Have you been out with your gun?"

"Yes," said the captain; "but have not done much; the birds are rather shy."

"Ay," said the squire. "I'm afeared the men don't look after 'em enough; everything's goin' to rack and ruin," and he poked the fire with an irritable and weary sigh.

"Oh! I don't think so," said the captain, soothingly. "It wants a little looking after, that is all."

"Yes," said the squire, "and that is just what I can't give it."

The captain was silent, and the squire went on, more slowly and, as Grace knew, with a deeper frown.

"When the cats' away the mice play, and steal too. I can't expect anything else, and I don't."

"I don't think there is much of that kind of thing going on, sir," said Reginald Dartmouth. "I have kept as sharp a lookout as I can."

"Thank ye, thank ye," said the squire. "I'm much obliged. I don't know what I should 'a done if you hadn't been here, Reg," and he sighed.

The captain saw the metal was hot, and struck it.

"I am sorry to hear you say that, sir," he said, "for I am thinking of going back in a day or two."

The squire shifted uneasily in his old oak chair. "What so soon for?" he asked, testily. "Where's your hurry?"

"My leave is nearly out," said the captain, "and I have several things to do in town before I go into barracks again."

"It's an idle, useless sort of life you're leadin' up in town," said the squire, irritably.

"It is, sir; I feel it," said the captain, gravely.

"I never felt it more than I have done since I have been staying here."

The squire raised his small, sharp eyes and scanned the calm, placid face acutely.

"Why don't you give it up then?" he asked.

The captain raised his eyebrows.

"You forget, sir," he said, "that I have little else but my pay to live on."

The squire growled.

"And that doesn't go far, eh?"

Reginald sighed.

"Not very," he said.

"You are in debt," said the squire, shrewdly.

"I am a little, sir," said Reginald. "A few

hundreds. It is difficult to keep out of it. An idle life is an extravagant one, especially in London, where there is little amusement to be had without spending money."

The squire remained silent for a moment, with his eyes fixed upon the fire.

Grace knew that his face was sad and worn, and intuitively she seemed to see the calm, immovable eyes of the younger man watching it.

Presently the squire spoke, but in so changed and broken a voice that Grace started.

"Reginald," he said, "I am an old man—older these few months than I should have been in ten years' time if things had gone on straight. I am thinking that the Dale won't cover Harry Darrell for many more winters."

The captain murmured something, but the old man went on, in the same broken, constrained voice:

"Old men cling hard to the last, Reginald, and I'm growing fond and childish. I'm fond of the old place—we Darrells have kept it stick and stone untouched ever since the first brick was laid—I'm fond of the old place, and I looked forward to seeing it in—in—his—hands. But it wasn't to be. Heaven knows it wasn't my fault. He stuck out and dared me; I wasn't the man to be bearded by my son, and Hugh brought it on his own head."

Grace strained her ears and started back with a suppressed cry of horror.

What was it she had heard?

Hugh—the dead Hugh—had brought it on his own head. What had he brought? Not death—oh, no, merciful Heaven! it could not be. The squire, Uncle Harry, had not killed his own son!

Frozen with the horror of the thought she remained white and cold and strained her ear to catch more of the broken tones.

"He brought it on himself, Reg, brought it on himself. It wasn't a hard thing—nay, it was for his own good. I meant it for his good, and he knew it. Was it a great thing to ask him to marry a good, honest girl worth her weight in gold and ready, ay, more than ready to love him with all her honest heart?"

His voice had grown louder, but at the last words sank again.

"No, he wouldn't. He gave me No to my face, and called me—villain!"

The captain muttered something; still the old man took no notice.

He seemed communing with himself rather than addressing the other.

"The Dale couldn't hold us both after that, Reg, and—and—well—well, it's past and gone for ever, and there's no—no—good in crying over spilt milk. And so you're goin' up to London, Reginald Dartmouth, eh? You'd better stay down here, I'm thinking."

"Sir?" said the captain.

The squire turned his face to him—it was a wrinkled, weary, careworn face—and it was rendered more worn still by the half-expressed look of doubt it wore at this moment.

"You'd better stay down here—at the Dale, I said," he repeated. "You're fond of the place, you said, didn't you, eh?"

"I am—too fond of it," murmured the captain.

"You're fond of it, and the men are getting to take your word and mind ye. And, Reg, I'm an old man, an old man. Heaven knows how long it'll be before the parson will have his last say over these old bones. I'm feeling tired—tired and worried with it all. And there's Grace. She's rough and wild, unfledged and awkward as a young throistle. Reg, what's to become of her when I'm gone? She'll be mistress of the Dale, and at the mercy of every scamp in the country."

And the squire groaned half with pain and half with agony at the dread that a fortune-hunting rogue should sit in his place at the Dale.

"Nonsense, sir," said the captain, "you are good for another score of years yet, and Grace will need no protector. And if she do—" and he stopped suddenly.

"Well," said the squire, sharply. "And if what?"

"And if she do I will, please Heaven, endeavour to play that part to her."

"You," said the squire, turning in his chair and gazing at the calm, handsome face, then returning to the coals again. "You, Reg? What? how?" Then he stopped and seemed lost in thought for a moment. Presently he said, slowly: "Reg, if I thought it could be managed so I'd rest more easy in my grave I'm thinking. Lad, you can't guess how I love the old place."

The captain interrupted him.

"You are wrong, sir; I can, for I love it too well myself."

The squire looked at him again, then held out his hand, which the captain got up and grasped fervently, then, instead of taking the chair again, stood up and leaned against the mantelshelf.

"Reg," said the squire, with a sigh of relief, "stay at the Dale. Sell out at once and come down and settle here. It has been working in my mind for the last week. I wanted to get it out—to speak to you. I'm glad it's over, I'm glad it's over. And Grace?"

"I came to speak to you even now," said the captain, respectfully. "For your generous offer I need not say I am grateful; you know it, sir—I could not be otherwise. Please Heaven I will do my duty by the dear old place as if it were my own. But I came here this afternoon," he went on, suiting his voice and speaking with a hesitation that lent it a mock humility pleasing to the old man but maddening to the girl behind the wall, "to ask you for even a greater kindness than you have bestowed on me. I came, sir, to ask you to give your consent to my wooing Grace. Uncle Darrell, you must have seen that we are more than friends, you must have seen that the dear girl was everything to me, and therefore I will not distress you by a string of lover's explanations. I love her, sir, and I feel that I could not be happy without her. Nay, more, I feel that I could not, in honour, stay longer at the Dale without getting my fate, for it is my fate, decided."

The squire kept his eyes fixed upon the red-hot coals, but his face was working with some emotion, and there was an eager light in his eyes that told how greatly this subtle move pleased him.

Here were all his fears laid to rest.

Grace married to Reginald Dartmouth, and the Dale would be in no danger of falling into a fortune-hunter's claws; nay, more, the old well-beloved home would remain in the family still.

At that moment half the pain Hugh's absence had laid upon his heart was lifted.

He turned his face, and held out his hand.

"Heaven bless you, Reg! Take her—she's only a girl, a rough, giddy young girl, but she's a Darrell, every inch of her, and she'll make you a good wife."

Grace heard the outburst of well-bred gratitude that flowed from the captain's lips indistinctly, and in one blurred mass of sound.

She leapt from the cupboard, and clutched the old carved bed-post like a stag driven to bay.

Was she dreaming or mad? Could it be possible that her uncle had given her to that smooth-faced, bad, wicked man?

Could it be possible?—ay, more than possible, for had she not heard him, with her own ears, declare that he had killed his own son, ay, and for as light a cause as his refusal to marry where his father, the same old man, had bidden him?

Poor Grace! with white face and staring eyes she pondered over this slowly and in fragments, and then threw herself down upon her knees and grasped the bedclothes with her two small hands, hiding her poor, fearful face against the bed.

For five minutes she remained thus, then she rose and sprang to the glass.

It gave back a white face still, but not a terror-stricken one.

The fear had left it, and only the Darrell firmness, obstinacy, and determination remained.

In those few silent minutes she had girded herself up for an effort—an effort for freedom.

Before she would be handed over body and soul to Reginald Dartmouth she would die, that was settled as firm as a rock within her breast; but there was a chance to be played before things came to that pass, and that chance was—flight.

Hastily wrapping her cloak round her, and tying on her hat, she took a little box that had belonged to her mother, and thrusting into it all the money she possessed—only a few pounds—and all the trinkets the squire had given her, she put it in her pocket and then, with cautious step, stole to the door.

They were still talking, the wicked men, and her eyes flashed fire as she glanced at the door.

Should she go now? No one had seen her come in. They fancied her still at the Warren. Yes, she would chance it, and, plucking up all the courage her by no means faint heart possessed, she sped with the lightness and silence of a mouse down the huge polished stairs and out of the house.

Now, Laurence Harman, if, sleeping or waking, you feel a sudden start within your heart's pulse, keep all your senses on the alert, for as one blind gropes through the dark with hands outstretched, so thy fate has started in the winding maze of life to seek thee.

#### CHAPTER XV.

The loss of wealth is loss of dirt,  
As sages in all times assert.  
Give me of health and wit a flow,  
And freely let the money go. *Sir H. Wotton.*

EVENTIDE at Alga Bay.

An English ship was just in. The quay was crowded with shippers, sailors, negroes, and colonists.

Here, chattering like magpies, a gang of slaves rushed to and fro with bales of cotton, fruit, and merchandise; there, a tall, sunburnt-looking settler bartered his corn for farming implements just landed, and elsewhere, and everywhere, a motley crowd hurried backwards and forwards, chattered, shouted, and bought and sold with the greatest ardour.

On the gangway, which had been wheeled from the landing-place to one of the large lading boats, stood the captain of the newly arrived ship surrounded by a few sailors, to whom he was paying their wages. At his elbow stood a slimly built youth dressed in semi-nautical clothes, and looking round him with wondering and particularly bright and beautiful eyes.

His complexion was startlingly clear for a man, and would have been almost too feminine were it not that it was of a dark shade, and was rendered apparently darker by the heavy eyebrows that nearly met upon the clearing forehead.

He stood gazing round him and waiting patiently until the captain was disengaged.

Then, when the last sailor had rolled off to spend his money in red Cape wine and fiery brandy, the youth turned and asked a question—a question that, seemingly, considerably puzzled the captain, for he scratched his head and pulled his chin, and went through the usual antics of his class when they are puzzled or nonplussed.

While he was considering thus, the youth still standing and waiting patiently, a cloud of dust rose in the distance, the slaves set up a shout, the colonists stopped their bargaining for a moment, and everybody turned his head to see what was coming.

The cloud of dust grew denser and nearer, and presently the crowd on the quay parted and scampered out of the way to admit a cavalcade of ten Cape horses, five of them ridden by slaves, four unsaddled, and the tenth bestriden by a magnificently built man, clad in the orthodox runner dress, and sweeping down upon the quay, at the head of his cortège, with the air and bearing of a prince.

His face was handsome, tanned by the sun, and marked by a stern, reserved expression that distinguished it from the weary or sharp look of the colonist, as a thoroughbred is singled out from a rank of cart-horses.

"Hah, hah! Massa Wild Laury!" grinned the negroes, leaving their bundles, and rushing up to hold the bridle and cluster, at a respectful distance, by the horse's head.

Three or four of the traders nodded to the horseman, several taking off their hats, with a half-friendly, half-respectful greeting.

With a reserved, cold nod to the whole he waved the negroes aside, and rode up to the gangway, his black retainers clustering together in a heap at the back, and chattering with their brethren on foot.

The captain nodded eagerly, and stopped forward. He had forgotten the youth for the moment in the prospect of trading.

"Good-morning," he said. "Mr. Stewart's man?" he added, conciliatingly.

"I am," was the curt reply, delivered in a grave and musical voice. "Have you iron on board?"

"Tools?" asked the captain, with a smile.

"Yes," was the reply.

"Plenty," said the captain, and led the way to the boat.

The horseman dismounted, flung the bridle across the horse's neck, and followed the captain.

As he passed the dark-looking youth on the gangway he cast a glance and half stopped, as if he recognized the face.

But a longer look convinced him that he did not, and, with a courteous inclination of the hand, a sort of upward wave peculiar to the Cape, he passed on.

The youth turned and looked after him.

Since he first came in sight he had not taken his dark eyes off him.

He seemed fascinated—drawn as if by a magnet, and even then, when one would think he had looked long enough, he bent forward to get another glance at the stalwart figure as it stood upright as a dart in the lading boat.

Presently, after the barter had been made, wine, sheep and corn for tools and English goods, the cattle-runner and the captain returned—the captain, with a satisfied smile upon his face, talking agreeably, the cattle-runner listening, his face grave, uninterested, and absent.

They approached the youth, still standing where they had left him.

"Hullo, my lad," said the captain; "I'd forgotten you."

Then, turning to the horseman, who had stopped too, he said:

"Look here, you don't want anything of this sort up at the Corner, do you, Laury?"

Wild Laury, as he was called, glanced keenly and



critically at the slim youth, who, by the way, blushed deeply under the scrutiny, and shook his head.

"No," he said, "I think not."

Then, addressing the youth, he added:

"Are you looking for a situation at a station?"

"I am looking for employment of any sort," replied the youth, in a soft, musical voice, that in some way moved the cattle-runner, for he half started and stared at the still-blushing face.

Then he thought a moment.

"You are too slimly made for Cape hard work," he said, kindly. "Can you read?" Then, as if anxious not to hurt the lad's feelings, added, "Of course, though, and write?"

"Oh, yes," said the captain, answering for him.

"He can read and write well enough, and figure too pretty tidy. Why, he kept the ship's log most of the voyage, and balanced the purser's books too."

The cattle-runner nodded.

"You can read, write, and keep accounts, why did you leave England where all those things would have been of some use to you?"

The youth turned pale, and, as if regretting he had asked the question, the cattle-runner said, quickly: "Well, my master"—the youth stares; can this noble-looking fellow be a servant?—"my master may be glad of you. He wants a trusty young fellow to keep his books. If you care to take service at a far-away cattle station I can promise you a good home and kind friends."

The youth flushed still deeper.

"Thank you, thank you," he said, eagerly. "I will go and am grateful."

The runner inclined his head.

"Good," he said, curtly. "We start at sunrise from that corner there," pointing with his heavy whip to the spot where the horses were waiting. "Bring what luggage you have to-night and be ready to start with us to-morrow."

The youth nodded eagerly.

"I will be there, trust me. And for to-night?" he inquired, turning to the captain.

"Oh, you can sleep in your cabin to-night," replied the skipper, kindly, "and I'm a-most sorry that it's the last time."

Punctual as the sun itself the youth was waiting at the starting-place, and greeted the cattle-runner with a frank smile.

He nodded and ordered a horse to be saddled for him, and waiting until the heavy sacks of tools were equally and carefully distributed amongst the spare horses, gave the word and the cavalcade started.

Six days passed and the journey was nearly over. During its course the cattle-runner had not spoken more than half a dozen words.

The youth, whose quick eyes seemed to take in every flash of colour and strange sight, had watched him closely but had never ventured to disturb his thoughts by addressing him save in reply to some question.

Yet though chary of speech Laurence had not been unmindful of his youthful companion—nay, more, he had been kind. The choicest steaks, the softest rugs, the first drink of water he had invariably offered the youth, and now and then, when some particularly fine view or strange creature had crossed their path, he had pointed them out with a few curt, short sentences, but not unkind ones.

When they came in sight of the farmhouse, that rose from the plain of flowers, he turned to the youth, who was staring with delighted eyes, and said:

"That is the station. It is beautiful—at least, I thought it so when, a year ago, it broke upon my vision; but use is second nature, and even too much beauty palls upon the sense."

"Oh, not this, not this!" exclaimed the youth, in his musical accents, and raising his dark, sparkling eyes to the stern, sun-tanned face, but lowering them timidly as they caught the grave regard of the stern eyes.

"Well, it may be so," said the runner, "but I told you, not to point out its beauty, but to warn you that we are nearing our destination. That's the station—your home if you decide to accept service there."

The youth flushed eagerly and was about to speak, but the other went on:

"You are young and, as I conjecture, unused to rough life. You will get nothing but rough life yonder. It is as well you should know it before you enter on it. Not that there is ought to fear," he continued, seeing the youth's face pale slightly as if with alarm. "I said rough, not savage. The men are wild but honest, rough but true. This is the end of the world, this out-station here, and you may miss the comforts and the luxuries. Think are you decide."

The youth looked up timidly, then flushed and knit his brows with determination.

"I thank you," he said, "but I am already decided. If your master will engage me I will accept service."

"So be it," said the runner, and, spurring his horse, he galloped up to the door.

Beneath the porch the settler was smoking his long pipe. He rose, and pushing the crowd of negro children aside, went up and nodded a salutation.

"Hullo, Laurence! Back? Got the tools? And who is this?"

"A youngster I found at the quay," returned Laurence, curtly. "He reads, writes, and keeps accounts. You said you wanted a book-keeper. If he suits he is willing to stay."

Stewart looked at the lad and held out his hand.

"Come inside, young air, and we'll talk matters over. Come you in too, Laurence," he called out, for Laurence had turned his horse's head and was riding away already.

He swung back like an arrow, however, and, leaping down at the door, followed the others into the room.

As usual the bottle was brought out and the glasses filled, but the youth drew back.

"I—I—cannot drink it," he said, flushing, then turning pale.

The settler stared.

"Don't like French brandy?" he said, with a laugh. "Well, I reckon you'll soon change that song. Well, here's your health. Laurence, the other glass is for you."

But the runner shook his head and turned aside, and, strange to say, the settler made no remark as to his refusal.

"Well, it's to be hoped you can keep accounts better than you can tiddle," said the settler, in his rough but not unkindly way.

"Look here, my lad, can you make anything of these?" and he took a pile of long account books from the cupboard and threw them on the table.

The youth picked one up and frowned at it as was his wont when anxious.

It was one mass of jumble and confusion.

He shook his head rather mournfully.

The settler burst into a hearty laugh and threw himself upon the table.

"Now," he said, when he regained breath, "that's a good one. If you'd said you could I'd packed you off to the Bay to-morrow, for I know there ain't a clerk in the whole world as could make anything of them blarney books. I tried and they drove me mad. It ain't difficult neither. It's only a matter of entering and checking. So many hundred come in, so many hundred gone out, and the price they fetched. Here, Laurence, show the youngster your method."

Laurence took a book from a shelf and opened it.

"There, look at that. Can you manage that?" asked the settler.

The youth took the book and his face cleared.

"Oh, yes," he said, "this is simple. I have only learnt to keep books while on board the ship, but I could manage this I am sure."

"Then you'll do," said the settler, and then he looked hard at the youth and thought a moment.

There was something about the bearing and the voice of the lad that told the astute Mr. Stewart he had got another silver fish in the net.

"Yes," he said, "you'll do. Now, as for all the rest, I'll turn you over to Laurence," and he sauntered out.

The youth turned to Laurence, who was seated on the table, his head bent down, his eyes fixed on the floor.

He started as if from a reverie as the settler spoke, and lifting his eyes, said:

"What is your name?"

"Cecil," replied the youth, dropping his eyes beneath the calm, cold gaze.

"Cecil," repeated Laurence. "It's a pretty name."

Then he spoke of the wages.

The boy was as indifferent to them as he himself had been, but stipulated for a room and some sort of office apart from the other men, and Laurence, promising that he should have these, left the question of salary to the settler.

Then he took him upstairs, showed him a bedroom, there were plenty to spare, fixed upon the armoury as an office for him, and, telling him the hours for breakfast, dinner, and supper, left the room.

The youth gazed after him as he strode down the stairs, and then ran to the window to watch him as he mounted his horse and rode off across the prairie.

For Wild Laury, as his fellow runners called him, seldom spent a night at the farm.

He knew no fatigue, no physical weakness. If the cattle came in at night, he was off again by the light of the moon to sleep far away at one of the out-stations, solitary and silent at the base of some huge mountain or the centre of one of the dark forests.

Solitude was dear to Wild Laury. He never shunned danger, but he was given to shunning men.

A fortnight passed, and the youth Cecil had be-

come used to his duties and his home. The first were light and the latter seemed happy to him.

He was handsome, winning, light-hearted, though he had his thoughtful and silent fits sometimes, times when the dark eyes grew darker and the dark, thick brows were knitted fiercely and sadly.

Every child about the place, and there were some dozens, ran to Massa Cecy if he tripped in sight. We say tripped advisedly, for the youth never walked like a man, but tripped lightly and gracefully like a "gal," as one of the runners, in his rough way, had declared.

The men, as well as the children, took to fancy Cecil, and when his clear, boyish face and bright, frank eyes were near toned down their rough and rather emphatic language, and were wont to pet him up with costly skins and such like trifles.

Sometimes, when one of them went to the Bay, he would bring back some slight piece of finery, in the shape of silken scarfs for the waist or fringed moccasins, all which were eagerly pounced on by the youth, for Cecil was foolishly fond of bright colours and pretty articles of dress.

Mr. Stewart looked upon this state of things as highly satisfactory, and set a proper value on this his latest acquisition.

He, too, made a pet of the lad, liking to sit down beside him as he worked at the books, and listen and laugh at his odd and funny stories of the voyage and the old English life.

Sometimes he would try and draw the youth out on the subject of his own past, but on that topic Cecil was obstinately discreet.

Anecdotes, quips, jokes, and a song now and then, but personal history never.

So Mr. Stewart gave it up, and, bound to be satisfied, grew more fond of the lad each day, giving up odd matters to him and trusting him as he would have done Laurence, who cared for nothing but galloping o'er prairie and through woods, and was as little at home as could be helped.

Cecil often talked of the Grim Laury, as he called him, and asked Mr. Stewart hosts of questions as to where he had got such a silent, unsociable servant from. But Mr. Stewart could be as reticent as Cecil himself, and never told him the story of Hugh Darrell.

So the fortnight passed, and at its close Wild Laury, who had not been at the farm since the first night of Cecil's arrival, returned.

Cecil was standing in the midst of a group of children when the hum of the cattle was borne upon the air and turned sharply as one of the runners said to another:

"Here's Wild Laury, I reckon he's been a long spin this time."

Cecil's face grew instantly interested and he gazed eagerly upon the cloud of dust, watching the men as they mounted and rode forth to meet him, and forgetting the children.

Presently the pitter-patter of the hundreds of sheep rang through the clear air and the runner came in sight.

The youth did not run forward, but his eyes flashed and a sudden gleam of pleasure shot through them that deepened as Wild Laury dashed to the very spot where he stood and bending down in his saddle said, in his grave, stern tones:

"Well, are you happy?"

"Quite," replied the youth, with a crimson flush, and gazing intently on the tanned and weary face above him. "What a time you have been away? Why do you go so long?"

He smiled, it was a listless smile, more sad than a groan, as he replied:

"I am fonder of the open air and my horse than the farm, and yet I have not been away for nothing; here is something for you," and he took a costly skin from his saddle-bag and threw it across Cecil's arm.

Before the youth could thank him he had touched the horse again with his spurred heel and bounded away.

Cecil looked after him, and with an unaccountable feeling of thankfulness saw him turn into the stables and dismount.

The lad hurried up to the room with the skin on his arm where the giver had thrown it, and sat down to gaze and gloat over his prize, not so much on account of its value—although that was great—but because Wild Laury, who spoke to no one, much less made friends with them, had remembered him and brought it for him.

That night he slept on it, curling up in its soft warmth like a kitten in clover.

On the morrow, as he was going down to the stream for some water, he saw the silent Laury seated beneath some trees eating a crust of bread and antelope meat.

His fur cap was lying at his feet, and his gun was resting against the tree at his side.

The lad took up his can and walked up to him, thinking:

"If I do not thank him now he will be off for another month, and will think me ungrateful."

Wild Laury looked up as he approached with a grave smile and nodded.

Cecil came up to him, and, setting down the can, said:

"I've come to thank you for that fur, Laury; it's a beauty."

"I am glad you like it," was the reply.

"How did you get it?" asked the youth.

"Took it from a leopard," said the cattle-runner, quietly.

"Shot it?" asked Cecil, seating himself beside the tall figure, and resting his chin upon his slight, girlish-looking hands.

Laury looked down into the wide-opened, eager eyes and nodded.

"Yes," he said, "shot it. Can you not see the bullet-hole in its head?"

"No," replied Cecil; then thoughtfully: "The men say you have shot a great many. Have you?"

"Yes," said the runner, wearily. "A great many."

"And antelopes, and deer, and elephants?" asked Cecil.

Again he nodded, looking down with a half-amused air.

"How I should like to be you!" exclaimed the youth.

The man's face darkened, and he shook his head.

"You had better be any one else, my lad," he said.

The boy coloured.

"Why do you say that?" he asked. "You are strong and brave, you don't know fear, you sleep in the woods, they say, and you can shoot the antelope. What more can you want?"

"Nothing," said the runner, curtly. "And yet you see with it all I am but a bear. Come, it was a bear you called me, Cecil, was it not?" and he smiled grimly.

"Jake was a sneak and a coward to tell you," he said, reddening and flashing with anger. "But I did call you a bear, and I thought you one for riding away without a word, and staying so long. I wanted to thank you for being so kind to me on the journey here. I wanted to tell you how happy I was, and how grateful I was to you for the kind words you said before we came. I wanted—but there it don't matter what I wanted, for you didn't wait, did you? Laury, tell me why you dislike to stay at the farm even for one night? You said last night you liked the open air, and the riding and hunting, but—but—"

"But what?" he asked, quietly, shutting his clasp knife and rising.

"But is there no other reason?" Cecil asked, half turning.

"Is it because you are unhappy?" The man's face softened more at the tender music of the words than the words themselves, and as he stooped to pick up his cap he said, with a repetition of the sad smile:

"You are inquisitive, Master Cecil. If I am unhappy, could you make me less, if I owned it?"

"I would try!" replied the youth, leaping to his feet, and looking up eagerly. "I would try, Laury!"

"And fail—and be disappointed, my lad," said the man, laying his hand upon the slight, graceful shoulder of the youth. "Better leave me to the wild beasts," and he turned with a hurried gesture as if he had spoken too much.

Cecil caught him by the sleeve of his leather tunic, and he turned again.

"Ah, you are angry with me," he said. "I was—rude to ask you. Will you forgive me?"

"Forgive you!" said Laury, taking the small hand in his large, strong one. "Why, lad, it's I who ought to ask your forgiveness. I was rough and rude—I have almost forgotten to be otherwise. Don't think any more of it, or trouble about me," and with another smile he walked off.

Cecil looked after him for a moment, then picked up the water-can and tripped home.

"Don't trouble about me" was easy to say, but Cecil found it difficult to do.

The tall, noble form and the sad, weary face got between the ledgers and the bright brown eyes, and the figures would not add up nor balance.

Meanwhile Wild Laury had gone off to the stables with a queer feeling at his heart—a feeling he did not like, for it unsettled him.

The lad's clear, sweet face and tender, anxious eyes had got into his heart, and he could not get them out, try hard as he would, and he did try, for somehow they made him think of home and the past.

He shook himself with a frown, and muttering: "I will be off to-morrow," flung himself into the saddle.

## CHAPTER XVI.

Man is his own star, and the soul that can  
Render an honest and a perfect man  
Commands all light, all influence, all fate,  
Nothing to him falls early or too late.  
Our acts our angels are, or good or ill,  
Our fatal shadows that walk by us still.

John Fletcher.

THE evening of the same day eight or nine of the runners were lying full length, talking and smoking beneath the trees at the back of the farm.

They were the next out-going gang, and they were discussing the probable route, etc.

To while away the time one of them produced a greasy, well-thumbed pack of cards, and with solemn gravity he and another commenced playing all fours—the only game they knew.

They were playing for small stakes—shillings, hides, and furs—and lost or won with the same grim taciturnity.

One man, called Tim, was particularly lucky, and several men were cleared out before the evening had half gone.

He was rather flushed by his good fortune, and as there was a pause in the game—a slight hesitation showing itself in the laying of the stakes—he said, shuffling the cards:

"Come, ain't any o' yer got any coin? I want one more hand."

Long Will rolled over from his back to his stomach, and flung a coin on the grass.

"I'll take a turn," he growled. "You've got all the luck, though."

They played more than one hand, of course, and the luck seemed to have changed.

Tim was losing.

The men who had been playing grew interested, and drew closer to the two players, thoroughly enjoying the sight of Tim's discomfiture.

Long Will took his good luck with great composure, but the losing man seemed inclined to be nasty.

It was unpleasant to lose the spoil after winning it.

Still, with the persistence of every gambler, he would play, and Long Will still won.

While they were playing Laurence passed by with a lasso that he had been mending on his arm.

He stopped a moment to watch the game, and at that moment arose a dispute.

"Hullo, you played a queen," said Long Will.

"No, I didn't," said Tim, picking up the stakes.

"Yes, ye did," retorted Will. "Put the money down."

Tim grinned.

"When I wins," he said, with a sneer—he had lost his temper—"I pocketed."

"But you don't pocket when you lose—leastways, not my money," said Will, with a flash of the eye.

"I played the king, and you threw the queen—the stake's mine—what d'ye mean by pocketing?"

"I tell you I played the king," said Tim.

There was a confusion of tongues directly, and the men sprang to their feet.

Laurence with a bitter smile turned away—it was such scenes that kept him out of their way. He preferred the beasts of the forest and the companionship of his horse.

"Here, stop a moment, Laury," growled Will, clutching him by the arm. "You was just behind my back, and could see the cards. What was it, king or queen?"

"You played the king," said Laurence, releasing his arm and turning again.

"You know he didn't," snarled Tim.

Laurence swung round, and his hand fell upon the revolver in his belt, but as suddenly he dropped it to his side again and walked on.

The men murmured.

Tim, presuming upon his forbearance, sneered, evilly.

"Why don't he stop? What does he crawl away for, the coward?"

The word brought the reluctant Laurence back. He stepped up quietly to the group, and looked the man in the face.

"You called me a coward," he said, calmly. "Because I did not put a bullet in your heart—is that it? Well, I call you a coward, too, and now we'll decide it."

"I'm ready," growled the man, drawing his revolver.

"I am not," said Laurence, "if you mean in that way. I should be a coward if I were, for I am a better shot than you, Tim, and should drop you as dead, at twenty paces, as that bird," and he fired at a peewit, which fell like a stone twenty paces off.

"He's right—Laury's right," growled the lookers-on. "You'd have no chance, Tim."

"I won't shoot you," continued Laurence, heedless of the comments. "But you shall have your revenge and give me mine."

"What d'ye mean?" growled Tim.

"I'll show you," and calling one of the natives he told him to bring his own and Tim's horse.

"Now," said he, when they were brought, "come with me to the cliff," and he pointed to a cliff that reared its head against the sky about two miles off.

The man sprang into the saddle, and the others, calling for their horses, followed him.

Laurence spurred the black into a gallop, and, followed by the others, made for the cliff.

One of the slaves ran back to the house, and, meeting Cecil, commenced a long rigmarole, of which the youth only caught:

"Maasa Tim shoot Maasa Laury on de cliff."

But that was enough for him.

With a white face he sprang on a horse, and followed in pursuit of the horsemen.

By the time he had got in sight they had reached the cliff, had dismounted, and were standing watching Laurence.

He had walked to within three yards of the precipice, and with his bowie-knife cut a long line in the hard sandstone.

Then he turned to Tim, and, pointing to it, said:

"That line is within four yards of the edge. I will race you from the trees, and this shall be the winning-post."

An exclamation of surprise and consternation rose from the group.

Tim turned white, but looked sullen.

"Who is to check on that bit of ground?" he growled. "One of us is safe to go over, and that 'ud mean—"

"Death," filled in Laurence, with a look of scorn.

"Just so, and so would a bullet. You refuse? Your horse is as good as the black. You have boasted that you can pull up within a yard. Here are three to do it in."

The scornful tone and contemptuous flash of the eyes roused the man more than the words.

With an imprecation he flung himself into the saddle.

"Down with you!" he said. "I'm not afraid."

Without a word Laurence remounted and galloped towards the starting-point.

The lookers-on stood grim and silent. They were too used to death to be much moved, but each felt a cold shudder run through him at the novel mode of suicide, for one false step and over horse and rider must go, and be dashed to pieces on the hard sand rocks beneath.

Meanwhile the word was given, and the two horses were flying towards the fearful precipice like the wind.

Cecil, panting and breathless, came up just as they flashed past to what seemed to him certain destruction.

The youth uttered a loud shriek, and staggered in the saddle, throwing one hand up before his eyes.

The horses tore on.

The watchers held their breath. Tim's face was white as the death he was tempting. Laurence's was as calm, listless, almost as indifferent as usual.

Now they are near. The hot breath of the horses fans the foremost man's cheek.

Another moment, and a sudden report rang out, crisp and shrill, and as Laurence pulled the black up, with a grasp of steel, on to the very line, Tim's horse leaped into the air a few feet behind, and rolled over, rider and all, shot dead.

The men shouted, and Laurence leapt to the ground.

Tim rose to his feet, shaking like an ague and white as a sheet.

Cecil rode forward with a revolver, from which the smoke still poured, in his hand, and flinging himself off his horse, fell half fainting to the ground.

The men crowded round, but Laurence picked him up as he would have done a child, and, striding down the hill, said to Tim:

"Run you and get some water—and quick; the lad's shot saved you."

Then he laid the youth on the grass and began unloosening his shirt at his throat, but before his fingers had scarcely touched it Cecil came to, and, pushing his hand aside, said, imploringly:

"Don't, don't! Oh, pray don't! I—I am all right, I—Oh, how could you be so wicked?"

Something in the deep, reproachful eyes touched Laurence's heart.

And he, who had not turned pale before the chance of death, turned white, and bent his eyes with a look of contrition and remorse upon the ground.

(To be continued.)

NAPLES has just celebrated the 200th anniversary of the death of Salvatore Rosa. Not an incident to celebrate, it may be reasonably thought.





## MARRIED IN MASK.

### CHAPTER I.

Silence in time of suffering is the best.  
Tis dangerous to disturb a hornet's nest.

*Dryden.*

In one of the most palatial mansions; erected in one of the broadest and most fashionable streets of London, a rich man was starving. Wealth lavished with a most reckless hand and accompanied by a cultivated taste had rendered this establishment probably one of the most comfortable and elegant in the metropolis.

The suites of rooms were carpeted, curtained, lighted, furnished beyond reproach. Forms of grace and hues of beauty were everywhere present in the decorations.

The servants of the house were in green livery, and so quiet in their demeanour and movements that they might readily have been mistaken for gentlemen.

Easily but coldly they passed through the sumptuous dwelling, perfectly conversant with their duties and almost ministerial in their immaculate white cravats and their immovable gravity. They were submissive subjects of the great idea which ruled the establishment—silence, unremitting, implacable, eternal silence.

The rattling of plates, the outburst of a sneeze or cough was resented by the master of the house as an insult, and the offender was dismissed in silence. Mercy was extended only to the domestic who muffled his refractory mouth or nose deep in his towel and smothered all outbursts of nature.

The door-bell at the front was trained to silence by all the arts which render a metallic jingling endurable. It answered, it is true, to a sturdy pull from a visitor outside, but it was only the ghost of a sound, which softly announced "You are heard, but you must respect aristocratic silence." The prevailing colour of the woodwork throughout was black walnut. If preference for any particular colour of hangings was discernible through the rooms, it was unquestionably dark green.

That hue predominated and may have been adopted from its natural suggestion of the gloom and silence of a great wood. But though black walnut and green were regnant in the silent house, they had been carved or embroidered into as many and graceful patterns as comported with their solemn dignity.

On the dark mantelpieces, and banisters, and chairs, graceful heads of deer, and fantastic heads of bears and birds were profusely carved.

### [THE BANKER'S GRATITUDE.]

There was another peculiarity about this dwelling where Harpocrates had evidently established his throne. It was the entire absence of female face or female form. The rustle of a woman's dress was never heard upon the staircases. From cellar to attic there was no sign, dead or alive, of the gentle tempter. Not even the portrait of a woman was allowed upon the walls. There were bronze gods for ornaments upon the mantelpieces, but no goddesses. Jupiter was there, but he was a widower. Some deadly animosity had banished the slight waists and small feet, and none but men ever crossed the threshold. Possibly this absence conduced to the majestic silence.

But, whatever natural or eccentric motive had excluded women, they were not there, and there was no anticipation that they ever would be there, singly, or in pairs.

A stronger statement even than the last may be volunteered. They were not wanted there, and would not have been tolerated in the house for an instant, under any pretence or insidious approach whatever.

So a wonderful silence reigned from sunrise to sunset, and the white-cravated domestics moved slowly in and out, at intervals, as if shod in wool.

In that stately house, and attended by stately servants, a rich man was starving. Food was there in abundance; but it was not of the nature he craved. He needed nourishment for his heart. He was alone in the world, and his heart was starving.

There are hearts which seem to thrive entirely upon gold. Kindred, wife, children, appear to be adjuncts to these, but not necessities of life. Other hearts are created for social and domestic joys. Without these they pine away.

Of the latter class was the owner of this mansion. But with all his powers, mental and material, for building up a domestic circle of loved ones around him this man would not make the effort.

Such violence had been done to the purest and best instincts born in him that he was afraid to make farther ventures in the commerce of hearts. His entire life had for many years been absorbed in the ventures of trade. Here was he certain of success, for he never failed in speculation. Winds from every quarter of the compass waited to him ships laden with his goods. Wherever he planted money it yielded him fourfold. His gift of foresight and his commercial acumen were marvellous.

Astute traders, speculators—all, in fact, who ventured upon the uncertainties of the future—felt relieved when they chanced to learn that Nicholas Rudd was making investments in their particular channels.

Men had actually become wealthy who never possessed any other business tact than that of watching and imitating Rudd's investments.

It was not always possible to ascertain where his eagle business eye was fixed for a successful speculation. But sometimes trifling occurrences in the market indicated that the great banker and merchant anticipated a rise in stocks or real estate.

Then the bold man who followed him was sure to reap a golden harvest, while the cautious man of long experience and admirable commercial virtues who hesitated was certain to upbraid his own hesitation and timidity when it was too late.

This isolated man had a sterling name for honesty. His promise or his representation was beyond reproach. He was apparently as cold of heart as an Arctic iceberg. He lived alone and courted no man. But when he volunteered a statement in his banking-house upon any state of things, or as to the real character of any trader or speculator, it could be depended upon as truth. He never misrepresented facts or men. His heart, men said, was ice, but his word was the purest gold.

But marvellous to his compeers was his success. Wealth accumulated in his hands with such rapidity as the years went by that it had a tinge of the miraculous about it. Where did he not own land and houses? In what real stock was he not interested? This strange successor of Midas was beyond the reach of that adulation which cripples some men and makes them tributary to the financial schemes of others.

"If you have business propositions to unfold to me," he would say to the flatterers, "speak; but if you have only such chaff to deliver as moves women, good-morning."

The word women would issue from his lips with such contemptuous accent, with such bitterness that men knew he had been terribly wronged at some period of his career.

There was a calm and intellectual beauty about this man which all recognized when he moved in the haunts of traffic. Nature had fashioned every feature and limb like those of Adonis. He was tall, superbly athletic, and beautiful in countenance. His fair, white brow and dark blue, piercing eyes and mouth chiselled delicately and small, and his fair, closely shaven face attracted instant admiration from all eyes. His gray, silky hair was ever closely cut, and no jewellery was ever seen upon his person. His dress was never distinguishable from that of business gentlemen in the street.

Even with the lapse of fifty years of life, time had dealt gently with his complexion. He bathed daily

and never indulged in wine. Alcoholic beverage was as rare to him as arsenic. There was but one object more detestable to him than wine. That greater horror was woman. With then this countenance so free from every stain or mark of vice, how could the banker avoid being beautiful when through his eyes intelligence was looking out, and careful study and meditation were year by year chiselling out his features in intellectual lines? He was as superbly perfect as a marble statue by a master, and equally as heartless and cold.

This was the verdict of the world. And yet the poor rich man was heart-hungry, but inflexible in his iron purpose never to trust a woman again. Thus into his house, his equipage, his servants, his surroundings did the icy influence of the man penetrate. In silent rooms and amid silent domestics he lived, ate, meditated and brooded alone.

He had been wronged also by his kindred in early life, when his sensibilities were acute and while his success was still problematical. Those of his own flesh and blood who had avoided him in his poverty and struggle he avoided, yes, absolutely ignored in his time of triumph and affluence. They were now to him of no more value than stones. Some of them would gladly now obtain even a bow from him in the street. A recognition from such a powerful relative as Nicholas Rudd might be a passport to influence—so thoroughly do some minds pay court to everything attaching to the wealthy. But the banker passed them without notice.

Of all the family who had been reared under his father's roof only one still retained a place in his heart—his sister.

He loved her. Everybody loved her. But circumstances had separated the brother and sister. They understood each other perfectly. There was no estrangement between them. But the sister's husband having requested her to avoid her brother's house she acquiesced, but not until in an interview she had obtained her brother's justification of her obedience to her husband. Rudd knew that his sister cherished him and defended him on all occasions, and he loved her too unselfishly to demand of her a warfare within her own doors. So he was really alone in the world and alone in his house, for he never entertained company.

A terrible gnawing, however, was always at his heart. The great pain arose from his memory of the past. He had not been born cold and reticent and heartless. But persistent disaster had been marked upon the records of his heart. And now he hated women bitterly, and had no friend but the isolated sister. But the more desolate was his heart from the loss of human companionship the more perfectly and unselfishly burned the lamp of his love for that sweet sister whom fate held away from him. Although her husband had extorted the promise that she would avoid the house, still she found at intervals means of conveying to her brother tokens of her affection. Thus was peace preserved at home and her brother's affection retained.

But rarely are men who engage in business in a great city after hermits when at leisure. There were times when the rays of kindness that had brightened the earliest days of Nicholas Rudd's life were remembered, and he flung aside the pomp and the silence in which he lived to commune naturally and without reserve with one who had been his friend in adversity. In his darkest day, when buffeted and outcast by his relatives, the boy, Nicholas Rudd, had found a friend. It was an humble friend, but an unflinching one. His father had beaten him cruelly because he refused to expose his accomplice in a boyish misdemeanour. He had dragged his father's fish-pond with a net, and destroyed every fish in it. The father was satisfied that some one had participated in the piscatorial slaughter.

But Nicholas refused to betray his companion. His comrade escaped punishment, and the boy, after being cruelly flogged, was turned out of the house for ever. The father was a determined man, and insisted upon the betrayal of the accomplice.

Thus they parted for ever, Nicholas carrying forth to the world the resolute will and power of endurance which had made him a successful man. He had wandered to foreign lands as a sailor, and from the careful saving of his wages had accumulated the little capital which had been the foundation of his mercantile career.

But it had been a gloomy and bitter day, that day of his exile from home. He was but ten years of age when the door of his father's house was slammed behind him.

The rain of autumn fell in torrents, and he crept to the cottage of a servant-girl, who was often employed by his father to assist in the dairy of the farm.

She welcomed him, sympathized with him, and gave him food and money and shelter. In addition, when he left her for the seaside, she gave him the

only article of jewellery she had ever possessed in her life.

"Sell this, Nick," she said at parting, "if your money don't hold out till you get to the ship."

That face, that tone, had made an impression upon the forsaken and agonized little heart that would go with it to the grave.

Years had now flown past, and the servant and the boy were gray. Fate had brought them both to the metropolis. Whether the boy was gifted with memory the following scene will determine.

It was the Christmas time. The snow was falling in feathery flakes, and people were merry in mutual congratulations, and gifts were passing into many doors in mysterious bundles. People with tender hearts, and thrilled by a wonderful memory of a Dixie infant in a manger, were wending their way to churches brilliantly lighted and wreathed in evergreens. How merry it was for all but the poor!

Nicholas Rudd left his stately mansion after the street-lamps were lighted, and, muffling his throat with the collar of his great-coat, walked out in the snowstorm unattended.

Many lights gleamed through the mist of falling snow-flakes, for shop-windows were displaying their most tempting Christmas toys and expensive goods for the allurements of the generous and the affectionate.

Mothers and fathers and sisters were thronging the bazaars or passing along the avenues with mysterious bundles for the little ones at home.

The opulent banker passed slowly on, solemnly attentive to all that appertained to the Christmas time.

He too, grand and impenetrable as he was to men, had once been a boy, and remembered what a boy's emotions had been at the recurrence of the ancient festival. Would he too, misled by the influence of the hour, turn into some toymonger, and order his bundle of surprises for some one? No. The handsome, cold, patrician-looking man passed all the shops, and leaving them far behind him wended his way until he came to a small suburban house at last, which belonged to himself, and which he had purchased on speculation before the neighbourhood had become populated.

It was painted neatly and freshly with white, and the blinds upon the windows were green. It stood a little way back, and a snow-covered garden intervened between it and the road.

He passed through the wooden gate, crossed the garden, and rang the bell. He saw the house was unusually well-lighted. Lights gleamed from the windows, which were covered with lace curtains, and in two of them hung crosses of evergreen.

The door was opened by a pretty girl, neatly dressed, who saluted him with deference, and ushered him into the little parlour, which was decorated also with Christmas evergreens. Then with alacrity, and half wild with excitement, the servant ran through the hall to a back room, and announced, in so loud a tone that the visitor heard it:

"He's come! he's come!—just as you said!"

There was then audible as great a conversational excitement as two families could well get up in the adjoining room.

Presently the folding doors flew open, and an aged woman hobbled in, leaning on her staff.

For the first time in forty years the owner of millions and the crippled woman of sixty winters were face to face once more.

The forty years of toil, vicissitude, and triumph which had intervened crumbled, and the outcast boy and beggar was standing before his benefactress, the poor servant girl, who had given him her all, even to the only gold trinket which hung upon her neck.

"Master Nick!" she exclaimed, "is it yourself come at last? Why, boy, how you have grown! What makes you tremble so? I knew you at first glimpse."

He was holding her hand as she leaned on her staff, but he was too full of emotion to speak.

"I knowed you'd come Christmas Eve," she continued, looking up eagerly into his face and detecting the struggle he was making to control himself.

The man who had fought the whole world, and faced adversity in every shape, and triumphed over every obstacle, was like a child again in the presence of the faithful creature who had been his only friend in the dark hour.

"Sophy," he said, at last, "forgive me that it took me so long a time to find you. I searched everywhere for you to give you a comfortable home in your declining years. Thank Heaven I traced you out at last. I didn't have you put into this cottage just for a year, as my agent told you. No, no; I am not mean enough for that. I only wanted to surprise you on this Christmas Eve, as you surprised

me when you hung that little chain and harp upon my boyish neck. It was your all, my poor Sophy! and now I have come to make you comfortable and easy in your life. Here are the deeds of this house. It is yours for ever. Hold on to it, and your son will be rich after you have gone."

The old woman stood bewildered, leaning on her staff, and holding the deeds and looking at him.

## CHAPTER II.

Virtue is bold and goodness never fearful.

*Shakespeare. I bid.*

"Come here, Bessie, and kiss mamma good-bye." The lady who was speaking flung back her veil and held out her arms to her little one. The child, who was four years old, ran to the street door, which was held open by Mary, the servant, and received the parting caress of her mother, who was going out on a shopping expedition. The lady gazed for a moment into the deep blue eyes of the child, noted the rose-tint on the little cheeks, and adjusted the brown curls, which had become somewhat disordered in her riotous play with the servant a few seconds before.

"Why!" exclaimed the mother, noticing a slender chain of gold about Bessie's neck, to which a little harp of the same material was attached. "Where did you get this?"

"Papa bought it for Bessie," said the little one, doubling up her chain in the effort to look down at the new present.

"Yes. Mr. Truelove put it on to her neck just before he went to town to his business," interposed Mary, the servant.

"Why, what a beautiful present for my little girl," said Mrs. Truelove. "Now my Bessie will be very good, won't she, when her papa is so kind?"

"Yes, mamma," was the response, as the little one put both arms around her mother, who was stooping low in the doorway.

"And mind every word Mary tells her when mamma is gone?"

"Yes, mamma."

"And not run in the street alone?"

"No, mamma."

"That's a good girl. Good-bye now. Kiss me."

The little soft, warm, pink lips were pressed to the lips of the mother. Then Mrs. Truelove arose, and descended the stone steps into the street. She paused upon the pavement for one fond glance at the beautiful child who stood in the doorway, clinging to the dress of the servant. Then she walked away, drawing her veil over her face.

When she reached the first crossing she turned back, drew aside her veil, and saw in the distance Bessie still in the doorway, planting kisses upon her little hand and throwing them after her mother. She kissed her hand to the child, and then continued her walk. Wider and wider at every step yawned the distance between her and Bessie. At length she turned a corner, and the view of her home was no longer possible.

The day was beautiful, and not a cloud was in the sky. She said softly to herself:

"How good is Heaven to me and mine!"

Then as the memory of the beautiful little face and the gracefully waving hand at the door returned a flush of tenderness passed over her face, and she whispered:

"My Father in Heaven, spare her to me unto the end, if so it may accord with Thy holy will."

But scarcely had the prayer tumbled out upon the air when something painful smote her. It was an apprehension without cause. The child was in perfect health. There was no reasonable cause for fear, and yet a sense of evil overshadowed her, coming so rapidly upon the heels of her prayer that she fancied Heaven might indeed propose to test how profoundly and sincerely she was willing to abide its will. At length the unaccountable shadow upon her heart became so oppressive as she walked along the noisy thoroughfare that she paused awhile and meditated returning to her home. Something seemed to say:

"Return and save her; return and save her."

Had Mrs. Truelove been a weak woman she would have turned back. But, being one of those women whose good sense and strong intellect are admirably balanced with a tender and devoted heart, she held on her way and lost her child.

Had she returned in answer to the mysterious and inner prompting, Bessie would have been saved.

But at the instant reason overpowered the unreasonable, and her foot fell in its purpose to advance, the mournful bell of destiny sounded, and the beautiful child who had until that hour been walking in paths of flowers turned aside to a path of thorns.

Had Mrs. Truelove at the instant of the inner



prompting turned back, she would at the same easy pace at which she was advancing have reached her doorstep in time to avert the great calamity.

She would have seen little Bessie sitting alone upon the lowest step, and waiting for the servant, Mary, who was in the house, where she had gone to find a broom to sweep off the dust from the steps. She would have seen the insidious advances of a stranger, a woman, who approached the little girl, carrying a small white poodle dog under her arm.

This woman, miserable in attire, detected at a glance the golden chain and harp on the neck of the child. She saw, too, that Bessie was beautiful, and that her clothing was valuable. She determined to capture her. Seeing that the child was gazing with delight upon the tiny white dog, she said:

"Pretty one, would you like to have this little dog?"

"Yes, I would," was the response, given without mistakeable evidence of pleasure.

The child had arisen to her feet, and held out her arms for the expected present.

"Come around that corner, then, and I will give it to you. I've got a little basket there in my wagon that you can carry doggy in."

"Oh, I can't—it's so far. Mary wouldn't like it."

"Where's Mary?" inquired the woman.

"She's gone after the broom," said the child.

The woman hesitated a moment. Then she said: "Here, take the dog."

Bessie took the little poodle in her arms, and hugged it affectionately to her breast. But the woman, glancing rapidly on every side, and seeing no one near, unfolded a blanket which she carried upon her arm, and with rapid movement enveloped the child in it, and, picking her up, ran down the street with her burden.

She held the little girl so closely to her breast that she was half suffocated, and her cries of alarm could not be heard. In another moment she had turned the corner, where a horse and wagon awaited her. A ragged boy was in charge of this vehicle, who assisted the woman to climb into the wagon with her burden, and then, at her command, drove rapidly away.

The vehicle in which they were riding was a dingy concern—a common market wagon with low sides—and had nothing about it to attract special attention. It had but one seat, upon which the trio were seated, and behind this a few bunches of vegetables were scattered on the bottom of the wagon.

As they drove along the woman, to prevent the child's screams from being heard, crammed the corner of the blanket into Bessie's mouth.

The little one was suffocated and terrified at length into silence.

The poodle had fallen from her arms in the struggle, and lay whining at the bottom of the wagon.

As they drove down a street a policeman standing at a corner heard the child's voice break out anew in a piteous cry.

"Stop there!" he called out to the boy that was driving.

The lad immediately reined in his horse.

"What's the matter with the child in the blanket?"

"It's nothin' but my little sister," was the prompt response. "The doctor just pulled out her tooth."

"All right! drive on!" said the officer, with a laugh.

The mandate was obeyed with alacrity, and the kidnappers passed on in safety.

When the setting sun that day had just fallen below the horizon Mrs. Truelove, having completed her shopping and visited several invalids who were daily recipients of her charity, sought her home. All apprehension of danger to her child had flown, and she marvelled that so deep a shadow could have fallen upon her spirits earlier in the day.

The foreboding seemed unaccountable to her now. It had been the first and only one in her experience.

Regulated as her life had been for many years, in accordance with Christian principles and firm reliance upon the wisdom and goodness of Heaven, she had never been subject to hallucinations or forebodings of any kind.

She had known too well physical sufferings and the disappointments to which all flesh is heir. But whether bowed down with anguish at the loss of dear relatives or overwhelmed by the pecuniary embarrassments to which her father's and also her husband's fortunes had at times been allied, she had proved herself superior to any fate by the firm and unwavering trust she placed in Heaven.

Under misfortunes she had been strong, and the beautiful and heroic in her at such times shone like a beacon to all who loved and depended upon her.

Through many trials she had entered at last into a career of prosperity and comfort. Her husband

now occupied a place of honour and profit in his native place. Her daughter, a widow, was energetic and prompt, and took upon herself much of the responsibility and cares of the household.

Mrs. Truelove had now, when her fiftieth birthday was close at hand, much leisure to devote to her little darling, Bessie, and to minister to the wants of the poor and the suffering whom she loved, and aided. The light of her faith and her good works was an ever-present testimony to the purity and religion of her heart.

The poor loved her, the intellectual respected her, the great often crossed her threshold. No less did she maintain the dignity of her husband's position than her own position as a cultivated lady and a member of a Christian church.

Into every walk of life did she find her way, and, where she passed, hard hearts became gentle, drunkards turned from their evil ways, and the desolate and oppressed poor blessed her.

Into the worst haunts of crime and misery she had often penetrated, and the abandoned seemed to give her the impunity and the safe conduct they would accord to a startling, white-winged angel direct from Heaven.

She knew no fear, and where this woman carried medicine and food hard hearts softened, and the bludgeon and the pistol were hidden away until she had gone. It would have been dangerous for any ruffian to harm the "Good Woman," for by this name she was known in many a den.

The murderer and the thief knew that she came to relieve suffering. They soon discovered that the woman who seemed so feeble in health and yet so persistent in relieving hunger and misery was no spy to betray them to the police.

Upon her lips never came the offensive words prison—justice—the court.

She spoke to them often of that bright and singular Being who had no revengeful purposes upon them for their crimes, who would never shrink from them because they were poor and passionate and bitter towards the rich.

And she called this singular Being, who had sent her with free bread, free medicine, and free garments, her dearest and only friend. And while many shook their heads and fancied the gentle lady was demented to give away so much without reward, all were gentle to her, and she was as safe among them as if she shared their brotherhood of crime.

There were poor, outcast women, sunken in the lowest depths of crime, who kissed her hand as she passed by with her well-known covered basket, to testify how great a hold she had taken upon their hearts.

She had nothing but gentle words of hope for them, and they knew that delicacies or medicines for bed-ridden and deserted sufferers were under the lids of the basket. And so they blessed her as she passed on her way.

When Mrs. Truelove returned to her home, weary and faint with her service, she was prostrated and half crazed by the tidings that Bessie was gone, gone all day, and that the police could find no trace of her. She had long been in delicate health, so that the cruel blow fell upon her with terrible force. She fainted under the tidings, and the servants bore her to a bed. When she revived her first words were:

"Send for Quigley."

Strange that no one had thought of this man before. He was her friend, devoted to her for kindnesses she had extended to his invalid sister. He was a policeman who passed her house every day, and to whom she always addressed some pleasant greeting when she walked in the streets, which were assigned to him as his "beat." If any policeman would be zealous and wide-awake in this emergency Quigley was the man.

The servants soon ascertained that he had been on duty in the locality about the hour Bessie had disappeared, but was now at leisure or at his house sleeping. He was aroused from his sleep, and upon learning that Mrs. Truelove was in trouble dressed himself with alacrity, and hastened to her residence. No sooner had the agonized mother disclosed to him all that she had been enabled to gather of the details connected with the disappearance than he exclaimed:

"I have no doubt that Bessie was carried off in a market-wagon by a woman and a boy."

He then related the circumstance of his having hailed the parties in a wagon, who seemed to be carrying a child in a blanket, in distress.

"The boy who was driving," he said, "was about twelve or fourteen years old, and had keen black eyes. He was quick and ready with his answer to me, so that I was deceived. He had short, black hair. I should know him again, sure."

"And the woman?" gasped Mrs. Truelove.

"I think I would know her too," said Quigley, "She was a hard-looking one, about forty years old,

with red face, and eyes bleared with liquor. She must have been a market-woman, for there were vegetables in the wagon. I'll keep a sharp lookout for all such people, Mrs. Truelove, and some of them may know who she is."

When the tall figure of Quigley had passed from the apartment Mrs. Truelove, from the bed where she was bolstered up with cushions, looked up anxiously to the clock upon the mantelpiece. It was already seven o'clock in the evening, and her husband had not yet returned.

Mr. Truelove was always promptly at home by six o'clock, which was his dinner-hour. Why was he dilatory now? The minutes seemed to be hours now that his presence and advice were so necessary.

At length his well-known ring at the door-bell sounded, and Mary, the servant, flew to meet him.

He had been detained by a legal consultation, and by a *détour* he had made to purchase a doll's bedstead for his darling Bessie. The present for his child was in his hand at the moment the servant opened the door for him and startled him by the fearful tidings of his loss.

"Gone! My Bessie gone! Where is her mother? Oh, Heaven! this is too terrible for belief!"

He brushed past the domestic and hastened to the bedside of his wife, whom he found attended by Mrs. Thump, her widowed daughter, and looking ten years older than when he had left her on the morning of that fatal day. Mrs. Truelove was ghastly pale, and a horror of something vague and irremediable seemed to sit upon her lovely face.

At sixteen she had been the belle of her county, her deep blue eyes and brown hair shimmering in its chestnut glass ensnaring all hearts. And now with the lines of nearly half a century traversing her face, and with the pallor of long-continued ill-health regnant upon her brow and cheeks, she was still beautiful, and a soft, heavenly light looked forth from her blue eyes, which would never lose their brilliancy until death should freeze them. But the agony of her darling's loss had in a few hours stamped the decadence of ten more years upon her face, and as Mr. Truelove detected it his heart was moved toward her, and he folded her in his arms and wept. At length he said:

"Now give me every item of the facts that you have about Bessie and I will be off for help and for a search. I am almost crazy; but give me something to act upon and I will be master of myself."

Mrs. Truelove communicated all that Quigley had witnessed in the wagon and gave him the probable hour also of the abduction.

He mused for a few minutes, then arose quickly, grasped his hat and darted out of the house without a word. In an hour's time he was standing before the door of one of the most successful and crafty private detectives in the city.

"Pryor," he said, upon gaining admittance and being confronted with a small, wiry-looking man with pale blue eyes and thin, yellow hair, "my child is stolen. I will give you half my year's income if you will return her to me."

"I wouldn't take such a price from you," was the response, almost feminine in its tone. "I'll try for your child on easier terms. Here, sit down. Give me the scent. In other words put my nose to the ground like the hunters start the deer hounds. I only want one smell of the tracks and I'm off."

The father soon made the detective acquainted with the meagre details of the abduction. When he had concluded Pryor exclaimed:

"Lucky, by jingo! Keep cool. I know the woman and the boy!"

(To be continued.)

**THE FRENCH EGG TRADE.**—The French egg trade is a thing of comparatively recent date, the number imported in 1856 being only 117,230,690, against 553,000,000 imported in 1872. Hence the number has very nearly quadrupled within the last sixteen years, yet it is remarkable that the price has in no way decreased; for, while the average price of the year in 1856 was 6s. 8d. per 120, in 1870 and 1871 it averaged 6s. for the same number; and, indeed, an average for the last five years shows wholesale prices almost always slightly over the figure of ten for 6d. If this price can be obtained for imported eggs, it is plainly not for want of a good market that the English leave so much of this trade in the hands of foreigners. There is no doubt that one cause of the great poultry productions of France lies in the large class of small proprietors or farmers, to which in this country we have no similar body. Such small proprietors, each having a few acres, are in the very best position for keeping fowls, their occupation not being too large to allow of the most complete oversight without any very expensive building or outlay in labour. It is by collecting eggs from a large number of these small raisers that the immense totals above remarked upon

are chiefly derived, though there are a certain number of larger producers. These latter, however, are chiefly concerned in the raising of chickens for the market, and have very little comparative influence on the egg supply. Of this latter the English trade is only a part, the French being far more of an egg-eating nation than ourselves—so much so, indeed, that it has been computed every Parisian consumes 160 eggs annually, though whether this calculation be accurate it is very difficult to say.

**RESTORATION OF KEAN'S TOMB.**—A movement is being set on foot for the restoration of the tomb where lie the remains of Edmund Kean, the tragedian. Kean was buried in the parish church of St. Mary Magdalene, Richmond, Surrey, and the hand of time has sadly dilapidated the monument erected to him. It is stated that some leading members of the theatrical profession and well-known dramatic authors are about to form a committee with a view to the restoration of the great actor's tomb.

## THE FORTUNES OF BRAMBLETHORPE.

### CHAPTER XXV.

MRS. PERKINS came in with the servant who brought the coffee.

"We are glad to see you, Mr. Douglass," she said, heartily, as she saw him properly served. And she darted a triumphant glance at her young mistress, which said: "He could not shake you off, my beauty!"

Lady Augusta answered the affectionate glance with a pensive smile. Although it could not shake her resolve, it was a satisfaction that she was at least to have the privilege of rejection.

Her power over her lover had been greater than that of his self-interest, and what sweeter triumph would a woman crave than that?

"He looks miserable, Lady Augusta. I've ordered a fire in his room. He must go to it, and to bed. He's not fit to sit up. He'll have a relapse as certain as can be."

"Oh, do not say that!" cried the young lady.

"He will. He's feverish now—his fever's rising. I wonder at the doctor letting him travel in such a state!"

"He did not let! I just came," said the invalid, laughing.

"Well, you must go to bed now."

"Do you order me, ma'am?"

"I advise you, sir. And I'll give you a fever-powder. I'm pretty familiar with the medicine-chest. To-morrow we will see whether you are to be allowed the society of my lady."

A footman supported Mr. Douglass up the stairs to his bed-room. He had over-exerted himself, and now felt quite prostrated.

Mrs. Perkins was a good nurse. She attended upon him until, late in the evening, he fell into a refreshing sleep.

"He'll be all right in the morning, I daresay," she replied to Lady Augusta, who was hovering in the corridor to get a message before she retired. "The danger of a relapse is over—if he don't get too worried or tired again. You must be very careful what you say to him at present, my dear."

The old lady was cunning in giving this caution. She guessed at the girl's purpose to break her engagement, and she meant to prevent it for a few days, hoping that, in the meantime, her love would get the better of her scruples.

For several days a threatening fever hung about the young gentleman, who had been so imprudent as to leave his bed without his physician's permission; but it never amounted to a serious relapse. After the first week Mr. Douglass began to mend very rapidly; the bracing weather of the early winter, as well as the gentle attentions of the girl he loved, brought him up wonderfully fast.

As soon as he could crawl down to the dining-room he began to tease Lady Augusta to fulfil her engagement at the time first set—between Christmas and the new-year—a period now only some two or three weeks in the future. Then, indeed, the poor girl had a struggle with her own heart. With her lover there in the house, and ill, and showing his feeling for her in every look and action, it grew hourly harder and harder for her to deny him. But her pride was equal to the emergency. She wished at first to break the engagement entirely. Then, when she saw how that would hurt him, she was obliged to compromise. She would not marry him until the impending suit was decided, which was now, she understood, set for February.

The lover fought stoutly against this decision. He argued that she needed his love and protection through the trial more than ever, and that he should be much freer to devote himself to her service if he had a husband's right to labour in her behalf.

These arguments brought sweet blushes on her cheeks and bright tears in her eyes; but she would not yield. They had not been engaged so long, she said, but that he could afford to wait.

While things were in this state at the Villa Lord Harry came home. The sisters who clung about him, the friend who greeted him so warmly, did not need to be told that he had been unsuccessful—his weary, care-worn countenance betrayed the truth.

That evening his experiences in Naples were thoroughly discussed; he related his adventures from beginning to end.

"You ought never to have left until you had extorted the desired information from that cunning priest," remarked Douglass, thoughtfully. "From his conduct, I do believe he had something to tell."

"That is just the inference my lawyer drew."

"You say Hawkseye has gone to Brazil?"

"Yes. He is well out to sea by this time. And what do you think he discovered before he sailed? Why, that the enemy had already forwarded a man to the same port. It shows, at all events, that their testimony is not so overwhelming but that they would gladly add to it."

"I can think of nothing but the priest," continued Mr. Douglass.

"How strange that my aunt should die just a day too soon," mused Clara. "I should like to go to Naples and visit the very places where she died and where our mother was born and married."

"We will live there, my pet," said her brother.

When the one most important subject had been discussed Mr. Douglass began to make a complaint of the way Lady Augusta was treating him. But if he hoped for an ally on the brother's side he did not gain one.

Lord Harry evidently admired his sister's decision.

"She is right," he said. "Let the matter rest for the present. You are acting from impulse now, my dear Arthur. After the suit is legally decided—if it be decided against us—if you still hold to your present mind, then I shall not deny you my influence."

It was then definitely arranged to defer the wedding.

It was not until bedtime, and they had talked themselves weary, that Lord Harry thought to ask for the letters which had arrived in his absence. There was quite a bundle of these.

He retired to the library to look them over, while the rest of the family dispersed to their rooms.

There were several friendly missives from acquaintances, making offers of continued regard and hoping that he would not be cast down under his present trying circumstances—a very few of these showing him that the entire world was not as selfish as it had seemed to him of late.

There were business letters of no great importance, only Lord Harry noticed that all the tradesmen with whom, at their own request, he had chanced to make a bill, had been in a hurry to send it in a fortnight in advance of the regular time.

At last he came to a creamy, delicately scented envelope lying at the bottom of the heap. It was directed in a lady's hand.

A soft thrill ran through him as he held it—he did not recognize the writing, yet he knew, by magnetism, from whom it came. He felt it before the monogram on the seal attracted his eye. It was Agnes's initials.

Agitated at the very thought that this had been touched by her—that she had written to him—he tore open the wrapper and spread open the dainty sheet within:

"MY LORD HARRY,

"My Dear Friend,—My aunt wishes me to address you a question: Why do you pass us without a visit when you are in London? She feels hurt at your neglect. She has an idea that you ought to be able to recognize your true friends, and I am of the same opinion. Will you not honour us with a call the next time you are in town? I am remaining here on purpose to see you. If I did not hope to meet you soon I should go home."

"With my aunt's regards, and my own, I remain, sincerely, your friend,

"AGNES ADELE MACLEOD."

The reader kissed the signature; he was alone, and did not blush at such a foolish act.

He knew that Agnes meant, by her little note, to convey to him that her feelings had not been changed by the misfortune which had overtaken him.

"How noble, how high-minded she is!" he whispered.

Then he bethought him to look at the date—it was ten days back. What would she think of his silence?—that he meant to insult her by a total rejection of her offered friendship. She could put no other construction upon it. And she had spoken of going home! Perhaps she had already left London. Perhaps she would go home and marry that giant

cousin of hers, who, at least, never treated her with such apparent contempt.

All night Lord Harry tormented himself with such fancies. He was up early the next morning, preparing for a trip to London. He did not wait to breakfast with the family, as he desired to get the early train; but went down and obtained a cup of tea, an egg and slice of toast from the cook. He was dressed with more care than he had lately exhibited in his attire. It was his intention to make a morning call before the dandies of London were out of their beds. Leaving word that he would be home the next day, and apologies for his abrupt departure, he was off in good season.

Clara laughed when she heard, at the breakfast table, of his absence.

"It was that letter from a lady which took him away," she said. "I studied the monogram. It was from Miss MacLeod."

"Then we will not complain of his desertion," smiled Lady Augusta.

At noon Lord Harry presented himself at Mrs. MacLeod's. That lady was out on a morning round of shopping.

"Is Miss MacLeod at home?"

His voice nearly faltered, for he certainly expected to hear that she had returned to Scotland. But no; the servant nodded. The man threw open the door of the well-known morning-room.

"The Earl of Bramblethorpe," he announced, loftily.

Lord Harry had an instant's sight of Agnes, sitting with her head on one hand, the other, holding her embroidery, dropped listlessly in her lap, her beautiful face very sad, before the announcement of his name caused her to rise quickly and turn towards him.

He entered, and the servant closed the door upon them.

Agnes stood still, trying to appear less startled than she was—summoning in vain her maiden pride and modesty to keep down the bounding of her heart and the colour which rushed to her cheeks.

Lord Harry, too, was making a tremendous effort. He had not meant to "tell his love" while the cloak of disgrace and expected poverty clung about him. But what worldly prudence can stand between two hearts that pant to rush together?

As he looked upon her in her living, palpitating beauty, saw the blush and the tremour, and met her tell-tale eyes, the barriers were swept away like cobwebs in the storm of joy and love which overcame him like a whirlwind.

"Agnes!" he pleaded, holding out his arms.

A moment she wavered—then came to him.

She half enclosed him with her arms,  
She pressed him with a meek embrace,  
And bending back her head looked up  
And smiled into his face.

'Twas partly love, and partly fear,  
And partly 'twas a bashful art,  
That he might rather feel than see  
The swelling of her heart.

They stood there in silence full of tumultuous bliss.

"Oh, Agnes! I did not mean to take advantage of your love! I did not propose to speak at this time!" at last exclaimed her visitor.

"You have not spoken," she responded, recovering from her blissful confusion, and smiling with enchanting archness. "You have not said a word since you came into this room!"

"But I have betrayed myself!"

"And have not I?"

"But I am a ruined man. I have no right to ask—"

She pressed her soft hand over his lips.

"Hush!" she said. "I love you a thousand times more now that you are poor, and need me! Why, I have always been poor! I shall know how to plan and economize splendidly. If you had remained so lordly a creature as you once were, I should have felt like an intruder in your oroonated family. Now I am—not afraid—to say how much—Really, my Lord Harry—"

"Plain Harry, now as you know."

"Really, Harry, I expected nothing less than that I should have to become a woman's rights disciple, and be the first one to declare myself. Your preposterous pride was nearly fatal to me!"

"And would you have done it, sweet?"

"I believe I should have been driven to it!"

Thus, in the gaiety of their great, new happiness the lovers jested and teased and flattered each other. Everything on earth was obliterated from their minds except their own joy. The sun shone into that little morning-room with a glory so utterly new and beyond his previous efforts that the young couple could not conceive what had given him such a summer brightness in December.

For the day and the hour love was exalted over all things. The loss of an earldom was like the loss of a flower to the young man on that day—of as little consequence. He was almost glad that his



troubles had thus proved the depths of Agnes's devotion. He could now be certain that she loved himself alone. Was he worthy of such love? Yes; for he paid it back with a love as unalloyed.

The first breath of the chilly outside world which blew upon their summer bud of bliss came in with Mrs. MacLeod, who, bustling into the morning-room from her shopping expedition, almost sniffed when she saw who sat on the sofa by her niece, holding that young lady's hand.

"Humph!" she snarled. "How do you do, Mr. Bramblethorpe?"

The fact is, Agnes had some dissimulation in putting forth her aunt's name instead of her own in that note she had written. It was the prompting of maiden modesty, as she could not bring herself to say "I desire you to visit me," etc. He saw through the girlish artifice instantly; but he was too thoroughly happy to be disconcerted now. He could hold his own against a dozen aunts, with that small hand nestled so confidently in his own.

"I am quite well," he responded, rising courteously, "and very happy, for your niece has promised some day to marry me."

"And live on oat-meal porridge, I suppose, an' bring up your bairns on the same!" growled the old lady, frowning out of the room to lay off her things upstairs.

Agnes blushed and Harry laughed.

"Even that will not be so dreadful," he said, kissing her.

#### CHAPTER XXVI.

WHEN Lord Harry returned home, the following day, Mr. Douglass, meeting him at the door, exclaimed:

"Have you heard from Father Chrysostom?"

"No! Why?"

"You look as if you had received great good tidings."

"So I have. I have discovered that a true woman loves me, and is willing to be my wife, rich or poor, honoured or ashamed."

"Good!" cried his friend. "I envy you. There is a woman loves me, but not well enough to marry me, rich or poor!"

Lady Augusta, who had come out to welcome her brother, heard these words not intended for her ear, and her colour changed.

"Perhaps I am too proud!" she sighed to herself; then, stealing to Arthur's side, she touched his arm, looking pleadingly into his face.

As the three returned into the drawing-room, where Clara sat, warming her kitten beside the glowing grate-fire, they none of them looked very miserable.

"There are better things on earth than riches or titles," quoth Lord Harry, warming his fingers at the fire.

But he had his hours of deep despondency for all that!

The day before Christmas Agnes MacLeod, by the urgent invitation of the sisters, arrived at Bramblethorpe Villa to spend the holiday with them. They had written that they wished to become better acquainted with her; and she had come with ready gladness.

There was to be no festivity at the Villa; but its quiet cheerfulness was pleasanter to Agnes than the most brilliant gaieties of the metropolis. She felt at home with the lovely sisters at once.

Many a quiet, delicious girl-chat the three had together, while the gentlemen were out-of-doors, or busy in the billiard-room. In those quiet hours Agnes was always sewing.

"How industrious you are," said Augusta.

"I am making up my own wedding garments," answered Agnes, in a low voice, colouring to her temples. "I cannot afford to buy it all done, and I mean to marry Harry as soon as this hateful suit is over. He has asked me; and, as I think he will need me, then, if ever, I have said 'Yes' without any pretence of unwillingness."

The sisters looked at each other—then:

"Oh, let us help you sew," cried Lady Augusta.

"You may make me some pretty trifle, if you please," she answered, smiling. "You know costly presents will not be the fashion, and I shall prize something that you have made far more."

So each of the young ladies set to work to ruffle and frill, and embroider as they never had done on their own clothes.

Augusta would not have a stitch set in her own garments by her sempstress, or any one else. She had not made up her mind to marry.

Agnes told them, in Harry's absence, of Miss Styles's conduct in London, and of the remarks which prudent people were making on her extravagances and the class of young men whose company she kept.

If Estelle could have turned from her reckless splendours, and stolen a look into the peaceful drawing-room of Bramblethorpe Villa, the restless world

of discontent would have gnawed still more keenly at her miserable heart.

She had heard, for she had kept a jealous eye on Agnes MacLeod, that the latter was visiting at the Villa, and she had been still more gay and still more unhappy in consequence.

Meantime those most interested waited in deep anxiety for news from Brazil. Nothing could be done, on either side, until the two contending attorneys returned from their lengthy expedition.

Captain De Vere Bramblethorpe had spent all his ready money, and was borrowing to pay his hotel bills.

The more anxious he became at the delays inseparable from the law the more reckless he became of his expenditures.

His pure-hearted young relatives, peaceful, if at times sad and careworn, had pity to spare for him. They were better contented shut out from the society in which they had shone, alone, with the two friends who loved them, in their country home, than the captain, trying to hide his feelings of remorse and anxiety behind a show of ostentatious splendour.

On the second day of the new year Mr. Douglass went away. He had received a business letter, he said, which would necessitate his absence for nearly a month.

Lady Augusta believed that he had been called to Scotland; but Lord Harry had a suspicion that Scotland was not his destination.

However, this was only a suspicion, since his friend did not confide his purposes to any one. Augusta cried a good deal for a few days after his departure; she felt that she had been repellant and unjust to the lover who had been so generous with her.

She was afraid that she had tried him beyond forbearance by her steady refusal to fulfil her engagement, and this fear grew as time passed on, and she received no letter from Mr. Douglass.

In the latter part of January Agnes returned to her aunt.

Lord Harry was obliged to be in London a good deal of the time, so that the days and nights again grew lonesome at Bramblethorpe.

Even Clara pined and drooped more than at first, while Augusta, feeling sure that she had mortally offended her lover, looked for some message from him with a sort of stupid despair.

On the first of February a steamship came in from Brazil, and on board of her were the two lawyers, who had endured each other's company through the voyage without once speaking on the subject which lay nearest their hearts.

Simmons had appeared cheerful, even exultant.

Hawkseye had kept up the bravado of a sunny countenance. But his adversary was not deceived by it. He knew that his opponent was very much discouraged.

And so Hawkseye confessed when his client hastened to his rooms on hearing of the arrival of the ship.

"I have gained nothing," said the lawyer, gloomily.

"I have ascertained that a Signor Marco Belleni did draw from the bank the sums placed there to his credit—that he left Brazil five years ago, but whether dead or alive now no one there knows. I also learned, to my own conviction, that this Belleni was the Count Steffazzi, living abroad in disguise. I found two persons who avowed to me that he had declared himself to be the count, and that his own family supposed him dead. Simmons also discovered these persons and took their affidavit to that effect. So you see how completely we are disconcerted. I wish now that I had choked that smooth-faced priest until I had made him disgorge his evidence. I would like to at least know whether it would have been for or against us. If against us, then there would be no more to say or do but to throw up our hands. I would go back to Naples now to see him, but there is no time. The case comes on next week. You are a lost man, I am afraid. All we can ever do will be to hunt up this priest after the case has gone against us, and, if he prove to have anything in our favour, reopen the case."

"I place no hope on Father Chrysostom," said Lord Harry, sadly. "You are right, Hawkseye. There is no hope for us. My sisters and myself must step aside and let this good uncle of ours take from us our birthright—ay, even our name."

He bowed his head in his hands, but presently he rallied, for did not Agnes love him? and would not that enable him to bear all that was about to fall upon his defenceless head?

"He cannot really dishonour us," he said, bravely. "We have committed no crime, nor did our honoured parents. So what matters a verdict of illegitimacy? It will not change us. We are what we are. I shall make a living I daresay."

"I admire your pluck," said the lawyer; "but, oh, I did want to make a show of fighting."

The next week the case was opened, and still Douglass did not make his appearance.

Lord Harry began to believe that his friend had shown the white feather at the last moment.

Captain Bramblethorpe made a formal appeal to the court to award to him the entailed estate and title of the late Earl of Bramblethorpe on the ground that all the children of the latter were illegitimate, and himself the legal heir.

In support of his claim he brought forward the copies of the letters about which so much has been said.

Estelle Styles testified that these were true and exact copies of letters which she had found among the earl's private papers, and that the originals had been stolen from her by parties (she supposed) interested in their destruction. She related all of the conversation—which she remembered with sufficient distinctness to swear to—that took place between the earl and his Italian visitor at the time when her suspicions that the first husband of the Countess Bramblethorpe was still alive were first excited. Among other things she testified to the earl saying:

"Name your price, Count Steffazzi. I would sacrifice all I am worth rather than have my dear wife, the mother of my children, learn that you are alive. The shock would kill her."

This main testimony was supported by the sworn statements which Simmons had brought with him from Brazil that a person who had avowed himself to be the Count Steffazzi had lived there for a number of years under the assumed name of Marco Belleni, and had drawn large sums of money from a certain bank, placed there to his credit by the Earl of Bramblethorpe.

All London rang with the excitement of this suit. Crowds blockaded the precincts of the court, anxious not only to hear the evidence but to catch a glimpse of the young lady who had been so nearly married to the deceased earl, and was now so conspicuous in the case against his children.

Many conjectured that the earl had engaged to marry her simply to stop her from betraying the secret which had come into her possession.

Her dress, her looks, her manners and words were coarsely commented on by the public; nor did she escape the especial attention of the newspapers. The position into which she was forced was not pleasant to Estelle; but she braced it out, for he was wise enough to know that if the captain were successful his patronage of her, and his little present of 50,000*l.*, would carry her to a height beyond criticism.

Only once during that long and tedious morning on which she gave in her evidence and endured the cross-questioning to which Hawkseye delighted to put her did she really blench. Once, meeting Lord Harry's calm, sad, searching eyes, she suddenly trembled and appeared faint; but her self-possession soon returned.

There did not seem a gleam of hope remaining for the orphaned children of the Earl of Bramblethorpe. Yet the countenance of his son during the latter part of the trial had undergone a wonderful transformation. He no longer appeared melancholy and thoughtful; an easy smile sat on his pleasant face, and he listened with equanimity to the most damaging testimony. The thing which had wrought this change seemed to have been a telegraphic message, which was handed to him in the midst of the proceedings. Curious observers had noticed the flush which overspread his countenance while reading it, and the bright look with which he had passed it over to Hawkseye. The enemy had not been blind, either, to this trifling occurrence. Simmons would have given a ten-pound note to have seen the message in Hawkseye's hand.

By the time the evidence for the prosecution was all in it was time to adjourn the court. The first person Lord Harry met, on leaving the place, was Mr. Douglass. The two friends shook hands heartily, and walked away together with Hawkseye. The three spent the evening together.

(To be continued.)

### CHARLEY GALE.

By the Author of "The Lily of Connaught."

#### CHAPTER V.

Thanks, to men  
Of noble minds, is honorable meed. *Shakespeare.*

CHARLEY GALE's sensations were strange. The sharp pain caused by the icy plunge passed away, the circulation of the blood seemed to stop, and numbness succeeded.

He knew that he was drowning, but the feeling was not unpleasant—a slight oppression on the breast, and a giddy, swelling sensation in the head, such as one feels when under the influence of laughing-gas.

He saw little globules tinted with all the colours of the rainbow dancing above his head, and had a

dim notion that they were bubbles caused by the departure of the breath from his body. But he was not afraid, he had no desire to escape.

His thoughts were in the home which he had seen so often in his day dreams—but it was more distinct now than he had ever seen it before. The flowers were far brighter and the skies bluer.

He heard the hum of insects and the song of birds more sweetly drowsy than ever, and a happy heaviness came over him—he was falling asleep—into the sleep of insensibility—of death.

Suddenly the lulling sounds ceased—the dancing colours and the summer scene disappeared as if a black cloud had passed over them—he felt a rude jerk—a blinding flood of light—a suffocating rush of frosty air that seemed to burst his breast—his head reeled painfully, and all was dark.

His first knowledge of returning life was exquisite torture, as if millions of red-hot needles were being stuck into his flesh, and he cried aloud with the pain.

He heard words of joy and congratulation, and became aware that several persons were chafing and clapping and thumping him with all the murderous earnestness by which living people frighten dead people back to life.

As his sight returned the first objects that met his gaze were Mr. Quillington and Kitty Nolan—both dripping wet, both unmindful of themselves in their anxiety for his recovery.

At sight of them and remembrance of the peril from which they had snatched him, tears filled his eyes, and a great heart-throb threatened to choke him, and he was largely assisted to that end by Kitty, who caught him to her capacious bosom in a hug that would have done honour to a grizzly bear.

"Oh, Kitty! Oh, Mr. Quillington! Where—where's Frank?" gasped the boy.

As if recalled by the question, Mr. Quillington dropped the hand that he held and started away, and Charley, following him with his eyes, saw several persons in soliloquy attitudes around a blanketed form near the fire—for they were in a kitchen—and recognized the light curls of Frank Weldon.

At that moment a buzz of satisfaction arose from the kindly group, and Mr. Quillington, returning, said:

"He is safe."

"Thank Heaven!" cried Charley, gratefully.

"Thank Heaven!"

"Thank Heaven," responded Kitty. "And may Heaven never forget you, Charley dear, for your good heart that's too big for your body. There now, keep quiet and hold your tongue. There's no worldly service in making excuses to the master, for he knows the whole affair. I've told him all about it, and he saw the rest for himself—how you were trying to help your comrades, and how even when you were stone-dead you kept your grip of the yellow-haired boy."

Kitty paused to wipe her eyes with her dress, and Charley turned toward Mr. Quillington.

"How can I ever thank you, sir?" he said, timidly.

"You are a brave boy, Charley," said Quillington, pressing his hand. "You have nothing to thank me for. I but followed your example."

The slam of a door nearly drowned his last words, and a harsh female voice exclaimed, in a tone of bridled anger:

"Humph! Curious enough. I should think, for a teacher to be taking examples from his scholars. Rather unusual, I should think."

Mr. Quillington turned towards the speaker and saw a gaunt woman, with vinegar face, sharp, restless eyes, and crimson-tipped nose. The cold glitter of her gaze, and her thin, compressed lips, told a cruel and vindictive spirit, and the principal did not wonder at the shrinking of the boy on hearing her voice. She was a vain woman, too—vulgarily vain. Before making her appearance, even in a case of life and death, in the kitchen of her own home, she had taken time to array herself in a silk dress so ridiculously puffed up in every direction to make up for her gauntness that, as Frank Weldon afterward said, she looked for all the world like a telegraph pole attired in the wreck of a balloon. She wore an enormous chain and a brooch as big as a policeman's shield, while the fingers of both her hands were so covered with rings from nail to knuckle that the beholder wondered how she ever contrived to bend them.

"Mrs. Crittles?" questioned Mr. Quillington, with a bow.

"Mrs. Crittles, I believe, sir," said the lady, with a withering tone and a corpse-like smile, looking around the room. "I can only say, I believe so, sir, when I see my house seized upon as a general hospital, I should say, without my being consulted."

"I am very sorry, madam," said Mr. Quillington, "that we were forced to inconvenience you. The unfortunate necessity must be our excuse."

"Necessity!" exclaimed the lady, digging her words viciously into the hearers. "I must say, sir,

that I cannot see the necessity of men and women mixing themselves up in boys' quarrels, nor the necessity of a lot of boys half-drowning themselves to set examples to servants and schoolmasters."

"Oh, mistress—" cried Kitty, reproachfully.

"Catherine!" cried Mrs. Crittles, solemnly—she generally called the girl Kitty, but her dignity was aroused to-day, and the girl's name had to be appropriately elevated—"Catherine, I should advise that you speak when you are spoken to."

This was intended to be an extingisher, but Kitty was equal to the situation.

"I always speak, ma'am, when I'm spoken at," she said, defiantly.

"Oath-er-ine!" said Mrs. Crittles, like the striking of a clock, "if you must have an hospital, and are desirous of becoming a Florence Nightingale—"

"Troth, ma'am, if I was a nightingale I'd go to Florence or some other climate more congenial than this," interrupted Kitty, defiantly.

"You can go," said Mrs. Crittles, very frostily.

"Thank ye for nothing, ma'am," cried Kitty, just as hotly. "You can keep your ticket-o'-lave for home use. Maybe there'll come o' you need it before you're gray."

Mr. Quillington, having secured his hat and overcoat from the table, interrupted this strange encounter.

"I am happy, Mrs. Crittles," he said, "that this unpleasant affair has ended so fortunately. I shall do my best to prevent its recurrence. I have already caused the arrest of the ringleader of the assailants and such of his companions as I could get my hands upon, and shall have them punished. Charles was not in fault in this, and I cannot think the part that this young woman and myself took in the rescue blameworthy."

"Oh, I should say not!" said Mrs. Crittles, looking from his soiled garments to Kitty's. "I dare say it was very generous and very dignified."

Kitty shook herself in a warlike manner, but Mr. Quillington did not condescend to notice the sneer.

"The most serious feature of the affray was merely an accident," he said. "The ink broke beneath the extra weight—"

"Yes," said Mrs. Crittles, with a bow; "I should say that Catherine is not a fairy."

"No more nor you're a lady, ma'am!" cried Kitty, excitedly, slapping her one hand into the other with a report like a pistol shot.

An angry gleam flashed into Mrs. Crittles's eyes, and it was evident that the next would be a hot shot, but it was never discharged, for the room-door was burst open once more, and a frizzle-headed girl and a bullet-headed boy burst in like two breathless couriers, crying:

"Oh, ma, here's pa! Oh, ma, here's pa!"

On the heels of these announcers a tall man, with a sallow complexion and peculiarly cunning expression of face, strode into the room in a tragic manner.

"Peace!" he cried to the juveniles. "Why are you so noisy, Peter? Why are you, Cilly?"

Peter slunk away in silence, and Cilly looked her name to the life.

"This is a bad hour to catch the doctors, Mr. Quillington," said Mr. Crittles, who had pretended to go for a physician but had really walked round the houses to escape the trouble.

"I am happy to say, Mr. Crittles, that there is no further need for one," said Mr. Quillington.

"Oh! Ah! I see! Very happy! V-r-r-y happy!"

said Mr. Crittles, with a look that betokened disappointment rather than happiness; then, turning, with ill-concealed impatience towards the few kind-hearted persons who had assisted in this little resurrection scene, he said: "That being the case we can dispense with the attendance of our friends. This boy can go to his home if he has one. Charles, you may retire to your room. I will speak to you about this presently."

There was a threat in the tone of the last words, and as Charley arose from his seat his eyes met the significant glance of the servant Kitty as she left the room, and he answered it with a determined look.

Mr. Quillington noticed this interchange and wondered. Mr. Crittles remarked it also and frowned. He had spied out eyebrows for frowning. They bristled out like strips of bear-skin. One would almost imagine they were stuck on for the purpose. It is certain that he was a perfect master in their use.

The good Samaritans who had assisted in carrying the boys thither and restoring them to life were flung out of the door under the inspection of Mrs. Crittles, aided by her staff, Peter and Cilly. That estimable and far-seeing lady seemed to be labouring under the apprehension that some of those persons would smuggle away the kitchen table, or the sideboard, or the red-hot range or some other light moveable, and she took her precautions accordingly.

Charley Gale was about to pass out also, but he stopped on the threshold and then walked over to where his schoolmate and fellow adventurer sat. Mr. Crittles's eyes were totally eclipsed in the frown he made at this piece of audacity.

"Good-day, Frank," said Charley, laying his hand on the blanketed shoulder. "I'm glad you're all right."

Frank sprang up and tried to throw his arms round his young preserver's neck, but the exertion was too much, and he sank back weakly into his seat.

"Good-day!" he said, with a smile. "Heaven bless you, Charley! Your pluck saved me. I can only thank you. I am all right now. Good-day."

"Quite theatrical, I must say!" said Mrs. Crittles, with the ghost of a laugh.

Peter sniggered, Cilly giggled, and Mr. Crittles spoiled a smile by ending it with a frown. Served the smile right, it had no business to intrude itself on that face.

"Mr. Crittles," said Mr. Quillington, with his finger on Frank's pulse, "this boy is very weak and feverish; I think it inadvisable to take him out in the storm at present, as it is some distance to his home."

"Oh, then, he has a home, I suppose!" said Mrs. Crittles.

"Am I to understand that he is another of your pupils?" asked Mr. Crittles, as if he was examining a witness.

"He is, sir," said Mr. Quillington.

"And it was through him that Charles and yourself got into this ridiculous danger?" pursued Mr. Crittles.

"Yes. It was immediately for his safety."

"Very well, sir," said Mr. Crittles, elevating his eyebrows, and timing the operations of his mighty mind with the forefinger of his right hand upon the palm of his left—the whole Crittles family, mother, son and daughter, involuntarily imitating this action.

"Very well, sir," continued Mr. Crittles, convincingly. "That being the case how can I—I ask you, sir—how can I, legally or logically, be expected to be thankful to this other pupil of yours—therefore, or to offer this other pupil of yours the hospitality of my house for that reason?"

"I should say not!" said Mrs. Crittles, mistily.

Mr. Quillington looked from the pompous husband to the ridiculous wife, and seemed inclined to laugh. Frank Weldon, weak as he was, did laugh, and that sealed his fate. Out he must go, weak or strong, storm or no storm. The frown on Mr. Crittles's brow said so, and Mrs. Crittles answered it by saying:

"I should think so!"

"My dear sir," said Mr. Quillington, "this other pupil of mine shall not trouble you. Please allow him shelter until I secure a conveyance."

"I will run for one, sir," cried Charley.

Mr. Crittles frowned, but said nothing.

The principal would have hindered the boy from going forth in his still damp clothes, but he was already away and the area door banged after him.

## CHAPTER VI.

Not the candid tongue like absurd pomp,  
And ooked the pregnant hinges of the knee,  
Where thrift may follow fawning. *Shakespeare.*

THERE was an awkward pause, during which Mr. Quillington worked himself into his overcoat as if there hadn't been a Crittles in existence.

The strain of silence was too much for Mr. Crittles, so he lifted up his head and spoke.

"It seems strange to me, sir," he said, "how the boys in your school, and yours alone, get engaged in these affrays."

"I should say it was strange," remarked Mrs. Crittles.

"My pupils do not quarrel among themselves," said Mr. Quillington, quietly. "So that if my school alone were warlike, there would be no fights for want of an enemy."

This shot silenced Mr. Crittles, and he contented himself with a frown.

"I must say," dug in Mrs. Crittles, "that this ward of ours is everlastingly racking our hearts by getting into trouble, while Peter here, our own son, has never yet come home with a broken head, or taken his teacher swimming after him into ice-pools."

"Ah, madam," said Mr. Quillington, looking steadfastly at Peter, "you are a happy mother. I am sure that boy will never rack your heart or disgrace his teacher by rushing into danger."

Frank Weldon laughed—it was his nature to laugh. Mr. Crittles frowned—it was his nature too.

Peter tried to put on a courageous look, but it was a miserable failure.

Mrs. Crittles flashed her venomous eyes on the professor, and said, letting her words fly like a volley of darts:

"I must say, sir, that I should have but little de-



dire to send him to an institution where fighting is one of the branches."

"I admire your foresight, madam; he would never graduate," was the answer.

"Sir," exclaimed Mr. Crittles, with his deepest tone and his heaviest frown, "I consider it my duty after to-day to sever our connection. I shall withdraw my ward from your institution."

"I am sorry, for the boy's sake," said Mr. Quillington.

"You need not trouble yourself about the boy, sir. We will take care of him ourselves," said Crittles, angrily. "You will oblige by retiring with your other boy as soon as convenient."

The Crittles dignity was at its height; even Peter succeeded in looking proud, though he had failed in looking courageous. At that moment a carriage stopped before the door and Charley Gale hurriedly entered the room.

"Oh, Frank, it's your father!" he cried. "Oh, Mr. Quillington, it's Mr. Weldon. I met him on the way. I knew the carriage and stopped it."

"Mr. Weldon!" said Crittles, looking at his wife with a sickly expression of doubt upon his face, and it was faithfully reflected in hers. "Surely, Mr. Quillington, it cannot be Mr. Weldon, the banker?"

Mr. Quillington looked at dignity tottering in its fall, and said, with contemptuous calmness:

"It is the same."

"Ah, my gracious, my dear sir, why did you not mention it? You will, you must excuse my rudeness. I should have known it was Mr. Weldon's son. My dear, attend to the poor boy while I receive Mr. Weldon. Mr. Quillington, I shall never forgive you."

"The poor, dear boy!" exclaimed Mrs. Crittles, sweeping down like an avalanche of motherly tenderness on the laughing Frank. "Oilly, call Kitty, immediately!"

"Kitty's here," exclaimed the servant, blocking up the door through which Mr. Crittles was rushing, covered with welcoming smiles.

She was in full travelling costume, carrying three band-boxes in one hand and dragging a small painted box with the other. Mr. Crittles was brought to a stop.

"What—what's this? What's the matter?" he cried.

"The matter is I'm going!" said the girl.

"Going? Going where?"

"To a confidential climate—to hunt for nightengales."

"Oh, go, and be hanged!" cried Crittles, frantically trying to get past her.

"After you is manners, sir!" cried Kitty, perfectly blocking the doorway. "Not a peg will I stir till I got my hard-earned two pounds that's due me. That's allowin' for the drabs I got an broken basin that I have no right to pay for."

Frank and Charley roared with laughter, and Mr. Crittles cried, in a tragical undertone much like the growl of a terrier:

"Woman, will you leave the way?"

"Not till I get my two pounds!"

"Mischief take your two pounds!" cried Crittles, ferociously, pushing her aside and dashing into the passage, where he came in violent contact with a handsome, portly gentleman who was just entering.

"Ah! Excuse me, Mr. Weldon!" he said, recovering himself with an obsequious bow.

"Why, how are you, Crittles?" said the newcomer, in a jolly manner. "What's all this excitement about fighting and drowning that my rascal, Frank, is mixed up in? I'm glad to find you so merry, it's a sign there's nothing to be serious about."

"No. We may thank goodness, Mr. Weldon, it is all over. We were greatly frightened to be sure, but a little care brought them to. Mrs. Crittles is with the gallant little rogues. Step right in, sir. There they are, you see, sir, laughing away as merry as grigs. Boys will be boys, Mr. Weldon. You would not think a thing had happened."

That was even so, for the lately rescued boys were laughing to the verge of suffocation.

Mrs. Crittles was leaning over Frank in an attitude of the most tender solicitude.

To judge from her face she had no thought in the world but his welfare, though she felt in her heart like biting the nose off the laughing imp.

This sudden change, illustrating the power of wealth, was too much for even the gravity of Mr. Quillington, and his smile was forced into an open laugh when Kitty said to him, in a loud whisper from the door:

"Oh, sir, ain't they a fine old pair o' crooked-les?"

Mr. Weldon recognized Mr. Quillington and advanced to him with a warm greeting.

"From all I hear, sir," he said, "I am indebted to you for the life of this young scapegrace of mine."

"My dear!" cried Mr. Crittles, in a loud, sweet tone. "Mr. Weldon—Mr. Weldon—Mrs. Crittles!"

Mrs. Crittles started from her statuesque position as if she had only that moment become aware of the presence of the stranger, and courtesied so low that she seemed to be disappearing through the floor.

This action was accompanied by confused acknowledgments of the honour conferred upon her, and excuses for the kitchen.

Mr. Weldon was no admirer of humbug, for he stopped the torrent.

"Do not mention it," he said. "Kind deeds hallow and dignify any locality, and are as grateful in the kitchen as the parlour."

"Worthy of Solomon!" exclaimed Mr. Crittles, admiringly. "Peter, Priscilla, my children, treasure up Mr. Weldon's beautiful sentiment—it will make an excellent copy-slip."

"It would be too long, pa," ventured Peter.

"Then divide it, my son, and it will make two. For instance—first—'Kind deeds hallow and dignify any locality.' Second—'Kind deeds are as grateful in the kitchen as the parlour.' Beautiful—v-e-r-y beautiful. Is it not, my dear?"

"Remarkably fine! I should say," answered Mrs. Crittles, with a honeyed smile.

Mr. Weldon looked from one to the other with comical seriousness, and the boys continued laughing, but Mr. Crittles seemed unwilling to leave the beautiful sentiment.

"Kind deeds—" he commenced, but the sudden idea that he was making himself ridiculous caused him to stop short.

"There's a hole in the ballad," said Kitty.

"What's that?" asked Mrs. Crittles, sternly.

"Let him hold his tongue," said Kitty. "Sorrow the hardship he knows about kind deeds—rule estate deeds are more in his line."

Mr. Crittles turned savagely on the speaker.

"Young woman!" he cried. "What is it you want?"

"I want two pounds and two shillings; that's allowin'—"

"Catherine!" exclaimed Mrs. Crittles, reproachfully. "Do not forget that this is a kitchen and you are a servant."

"Oh, indeed, ma'am!" cried Kitty, imitating the lady's frosty manner. "Changes are lightsome. A while ago it was a general hospital, and I was a nightingale, no less."

The idea of a nightingale weighing over two hundred pounds avoirdupois was too rich to be withstood, and the gentlemen joined in the laughter of the boys. Crittles laughed too in a style of his own, that didn't penetrate beneath the skin, for the anger boiling within wouldn't let it.

"You want two pounds two shillings?" he said, advancing to Kitty, pocket-book in hand.

"Two pounds two shillings; yes, sir." That includes the price of the basin that Oilly broke, and the misses charged to me."

"Oh, ma!" cried Oilly, with raised hands.

"That I may never die in sin, gentlemen," said Kitty, turning confidentially to Quillington and Weldon. "If there's a word of falsehood in it, there's Oilly. She's not so silly as her name and looks—she's a silly-go-soffly. Well, she smashed a basin—"

"Two pounds!" exclaimed Mr. Crittles, slapping the money on the lid of one of her bandboxes.

"Two shillings more 'av you please. And for fear, gentlemen, of disturbances, she glued it together with soap, and behold ye, when I laid my hand on it, it fell into smithereens; and that's what she charges me two shillings for."

Mr. Crittles slapped the two shillings on the box-lid, and seized Kitty by the left arm; Mrs. Crittles rapidly advanced against the enemy's right, while the reserve, consisting of Oilly, under the command of Peter, desperately hurled itself upon the centre. The effect of this combined movement was to sweep Kitty and the boxes from sight, and the sound of conflict rolled away along the passage.

"Come, come, my young hyena," said Mr. Weldon to Frank, who had rolled from the chair to the floor. "If you are so able to laugh you are able to get home."

In a few short sentences Mr. Quillington explained the late occurrence, and when Crittles returned at the head of his victorious forces he saw the wealthy Mr. Weldon shaking Charley Gale by both hands with the warmest expressions of admiration and gratitude. That sight was wormwood to the whole Crittles family.

"Mr. Crittles," said Weldon, "I beg you and your kind lady to accept my thanks for the service you have rendered to this underserving young Arab."

Mr. and Mrs. Crittles begged him not to mention it; that no one could do too much for the dear boy—he was so engaging, so light-hearted, so very merry, that it was a real treat to be able to serve

him, etc., etc., with many mock-modest smiles and many cringing bends of the knees and back.

"Oh, goodness," laughed Frank, aside to Charley. "If people did wear their hearts upon their sleeves what a show 'twould be."

Mr. Weldon then proposed that they should start for home, and Mr. Crittles insisted that he should accept the loan of the blankets to keep the dear boy warm, and Mrs. Crittles whispered, with a frown, that they belonged to Charley's bed, and Mr. Crittles whispered back that it mattered not—the young rascal might do without; but the difficulty was settled by Weldon's coachman appearing with an arm-load of wraps, and Frank, being rolled up like a mummy, was borne to the carriage, followed to the door by the whole company.

"Good-bye, Frank!"

"Good-bye, Charley!"

"I forgot to say, gentlemen," said Mr. Quillington, on the steps, "that I am responsible for the attendance of the boys at the court to-morrow morning, to appear against the young rioters I had arrested."

"I shall be there," said Mr. Weldon.

"I shall attend professionally," said Mr. Crittles, loftily, "in behalf of my ward."

"He is a noble boy, Mr. Crittles," said Weldon.

"You should be proud of him."

"I am!" said Mr. Crittles, laying his hand paternally on Charley's head.

But as Mr. Quillington passed down the street and the carriage rolled away, the bland smile disappeared from his evil face, his fingers clenched in the boy's hair, and as he whirled him back into the passage he hissed through his closed teeth:

"Now, you brat, I'll teach you to disgrace a gentleman!"

He shook the boy so violently by the hair that he cried out with pain.

"Oh, you young viper!" cried Mrs. Crittles, rushing up and striking him in the face with her clenched hand.

This was a signal for the young Crittleses to attack Charley also.

Peter ran up and kicked him in the shins as he was dragged along the passage.

"You laughed at pa!" he cried.

"You made fun of ma!" exclaimed Priscilla, helping her father to pull his hair.

The boy struggled hard, but found it impossible to free himself from the grip of the elder dragons; he had, however, the happiness of planting his foot solidly in Master Peter's stomach, and sending him and Oilly sprawling on the floor.

Mr. Crittles was foaming with rage.

"Walk right upstairs, you scoundrel; walk right upstairs! I'll cure you of your academy teachings!"

Mr. Crittles was a powerful man, and his strength was increased by his anger at the thought of the contemptible position in which his mean spirit had so lately placed him.

Though Charley resisted with all his power, and clung to the banisters at every step, he was at length dragged to the hall above, but both Crittles and his wife were so much exhausted by the exertion that they were glad to pause for rest. Both, however, still held on to the boy.

"Will you go to your room quietly?" gasped Crittles.

"No, I will not," cried the boy, resolutely. "Let me go. You have no right to keep me here against my will."

"Haven't I?" said Crittles, viciously. "We'll see that, sir. I'll show you that I have the right to keep you, and I will force you to obey and treat me with respect."

"You can't do it. I won't obey you. I can't respect you. I hate you. I despise you," cried the boy, stamping his foot at the end of every sentence.

"Oh, you do, do you?" hissed Crittles, tightening his hold upon him.

"Yes, I do," answered Charley, defiantly. "I will leave your house. I want to have nothing more to do with you. You are a mean man—you are a dishonest man—you use the money that is sent for me and try to make me a dependent and a drudge. I will not be either. This is a free country, and I will earn my living. No one—not even my father or mother—has a right to make me the slave to such a man as you."

Mr. Crittles's features were working convulsively with passion; his eyes blazed with a green lustre beneath his shaggy brows, and his wolfish teeth glittered frothily in the light of the hall lamp. He muttered some words savagely and raised his clenched fist, but Charley burst away and escaped the blow.

"Don't strike me again," he cried. "I only want you to let me go. You can keep the money you pay, I won't ask you for it. I don't want to know who sends it. If she is ashamed of me, it is better, maybe, that I don't know her."



[GOING TO A CONGENIAL CLIME.]

"Oh, Ezra! Did you ever hear the like?" exclaimed Mrs. Crittles, with upraised hands. Mr. Crittles said nothing, but he looked the demon perfectly.

"If you let me go quietly," said the boy, "I will not trouble you again. If you strike me you will suffer for it. I am not friendless. If you imprison me I will escape and expose you. Yes—I'll escape, whether you put me in the garret or the cellar. If you kill me I'll be searched for—and you'll be hanged. There!"

Whether Charley's last emphatic word was merely a closing flourish or referred to the ringing of the street-door bell was doubtful. Certain it is that at that moment the street-door bell was rung in a loud and peremptory manner, and if it had actually been the signal of the hangman's arrival Mr. Crittles's change from the demon-lion to the angel-lamb could not have been more sudden. The same limpness of limb and body that he had displayed on the announcement of Mr. Weldon came over him—the same diabolical attempt at good nature distorted his face. Yet there was a difference too. Mr. Weldon's appearance had only shown forth the fawning of a self-seeker upon a wealthy man; but now fear—abject fear—shone through the cringing.

"Now, Charles," he said, in a softened, argumentative manner, "why do you act so? You know I have a bad temper, why do you raise it?"

"Why do you treat me so?" cried Charley.

"I own I have been harsh, Charles," said Crittles, sorrowfully, "but have I not had provocation? Think of that laughing jackanapes—"

The frown that was gathering on his face disappeared suddenly, and he seemed to shrink to half his bulk as the bell was again rung impatiently. He turned anxiously toward the door, then again toward the boy; he looked as if he did not know where to go, but had some idea of taking to his heels.

"Now, now, my dear boy," he said, in a hurried undertone, "this is a gentleman on business. Don't, for goodness' sake, disgrace me by causing another scene."

"Do not, Charley, that's a dear boy," said Mrs. Crittles, in as great agitation as her husband.

"You struck me," said Charley.

"Forgive that. I will make amends!" she said, hurriedly.

"Let me go then."

"Yes, yes," said Crittles, "but not now, not at night. Go to your room. We will have a talk. You can tell me your wrongs and they shall be righted."

Charley paused to think. He heard an impatient

stamping on the steps without. He knew his power at that moment, and the frightened manner of Crittles and his wife gave him an idea that this visitor on business was in some way connected with his affairs. He thought of Kitty speaking of a whispering gentleman that brought the money, and he determined to fathom this mystery if he could. He could escape any time. This passed through his mind like a flash.

"I will go to my room," he said.

Crittles and wife gave a sigh of relief and drew aside to let him go to the stairs.

"You will be none the loser by it, Charles," said Crittles.

"I hope not," said Charles, running lightly up.

But he caught the quick, vicious look that passed between man and wife, and heard Crittles whisper quickly to Peter, who commenced to ascend the stairs slowly.

Charley paused on the dark landing above. He saw Mrs. Crittles and Cilly disappear like phantoms, and Mr. Crittles hastening to open the door, and he stooped down to get a view of the gentleman on business.

A very vague view he got, for a gust of wintry air from the door flickered the hall light, but that view was sufficient to arouse all the boy's curiosity.

The visitor was a tall man, with complexion as dark as an Indian's, long, Indian-like hair, a broad-brimmed, soft felt hat and a black cloak muffled close to his neck—just the mysterious, theatrical sort of personage, Charley thought, to take part in villainous stratagems and murderous plots.

He was sure that this was Kitty's "whispering gentleman." He looked every inch a whispering gentleman, and that cloak was the very thing to carry money-bags beneath.

That was the man, and he must watch him. But how? for Peter's bullet-head was bobbing slowly up the stairs, though from his gaping back over his shoulder he did not notice Charley.

What the mischief was Peter coming upstairs for? was the next thought. Was it to keep him from escaping? Charley laughed at the idea. He knew that if he turned on Peter he would be glad to leave him a free passage.

But that was not his policy—he must quiet their suspicions in order to watch the stranger.

Peter's bed and his own were in the same room on the topmost floor, and thither he proceeded in darkness, and seated himself to think upon his course.

He must be satisfied about this stranger, and there was no way to do that but to overhear the conversation between him and Mr. Crittles, or some portion of it.

He did not like the idea of playing spy or listener, but he could not crush back the thought that he was justified in doing so. Candidly he did not try very hard to crush it back.

Thoughts that have our own interests in their favour have rarely to fight long for victory.

If he could only reach the back parlour, he thought, but he knew Peter was set to watch him, and that he could not get down while he held possession of the stairs.

He must out-general him. In pursuance of this plan he groped for matches and lit the bed-room lamp.

He knew Peter's hungry disposition, and supposed that when he saw him, anchored in the chamber, he would depart supperward.

But as the flame of the lamp brightened up the thoughts of Peter and the mysterious stranger vanished at the sight of a crumpled sheet of writing paper lying on the table, with some mis-spelt words scrawled on it in a very large hand.

He lifted it and read:

"DEAR CHARLEY: This is to let you No that Old hookem Snivey, you No hoo, nor his Yfe needer, didn't maik nothin' out of Charjen me for the Baysen i diddent braik, but it was Silly. I took the worth of it in paypers i see him hidin', that i am shure blongs to you. You will here a row in the Kamp 1 of thees daze, but i advoyes you git Out of it, and come to your frend Kitty, hoo will never see you Want for bite or Sup. Hopping that you Will escarp the clutches of the Old Boy, that is Krittles and his Yfe, and come to Claim your Own that i hold for you i remane, while trubbel blows a breath at you, your troo friend,  
KITTY NOLAN."

Charley read this with palpitating heart. He now knew what Kitty meant when she promised to "put a pin in ould Crittles's nose before the sunflowers blossomed." These papers were the "pin," and also the key to the mystery that surrounded his origin. He must go to Kitty immediately, and get possession of the precious documents.

"Please turn over," he read on looking again at the sheet. He did so and saw the following: "You will eery find Me livin' with My Brother on the Top-flure, back room, to the rite up four pare of stares, six doores from—"

He was deciphering the mis-spelt name of the street when a slight noise caused him to raise his head and look at the door. It was open a few inches, and a hand put around the edge was slyly removing the key.

(To be continued.)





[CARLOS THE PAGE.]

## THE FOOT TICKLER.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

*"Evelyn's Plot," "Darcy's Child," "One Sparkle of Gold," &c., &c."*

## CHAPTER XXIX.

"It's a lady in her earliest youth—  
The last of that illustrious family.  
He who observes it, ere he passes on,  
Gazes his fill and comes and comes again  
That he may call it up when far away."

CELIA VYVIAN was supposed to be dying. The physicians had all but relinquished hope. The betrothed lover was, as in duty bound, in gloomy despair.

And the gay world, after a momentary thrill of sympathy had electrified its ranks at the catastrophe which thus arrested in her bright career a beautiful and wealthy heiress, could scarcely afford time for more prolonged or serious consideration of her fate.

"Really life is too short, my dear Barbara," observed Lady Roseford, "to exhaust oneself in agonies of sympathy or ecstasies of delight. Of course it is very sad, but then such things may occur to you, to me, to any one. And our places would be as quickly filled up as this unfortunate girl's. Don't sacrifice your own beauty and vivacity at the tomb of this luckless Celia. It is far too Juggernaut an immolation for our modern times."

"Dear countess, she is not dead," remonstrated Barbara, reproachfully. "You know the servants seemed to give a hesitating reply this morning, as if there had been a slight change."

"Yes—most likely for the worse; but really, my dear child, you are actually getting hollow-eyed, and I do believe there is a faint streak like a coming line in your brow. For Heaven's sake don't look so woe-begone or I shall really relinquish my chaperonage at once. "People won't believe your baptismal register, to say nothing of less undoubted authority, if you are so prematurely grave. Will you go with me to the bazaar for the Wellington Asylum this afternoon? Every one will be there."

"Then I had better stay at home and recover my departed looks," returned Barbara, smiling; "more especially if I am to go to Lady Downton's ball. So if you will leave me at home, my dear Lady Roseford, I will try to shine forth in a veiled lustre this evening."

"Well, that pays sometimes," returned the countess, gravely. "Nothing like a little change of mood and manner to excite admiration. It stimulates

curiosity, you see, and prevents any satiety. So, on condition of that bargain, I will perhaps yield to your fancies for this once. There's the carriage, so I must go," she added. "I promised to be there early, and it's now five o'clock, but, n'importe, a few extra purchases will make my peace."

And, kissing her young ward, with something very like real affection, she took her leave.

Barbara remained in a quiet, somewhat depressed fit of musing after her chaperone's departure, for which, in truth, she could not account. True, she had a very sincere and womanly sympathy for Celia Vyvian, struck down as she was in the very bloom of youth and prosperity, and it was really a sore disappointment not to be allowed to carry out her romantic wish of devoting herself to the sick-room; but that scarcely explained that morbid restlessness, that unnatural distaste for society and its pleasures that had seized upon her, nor the sadness which, as Lady Roseford had truly averred, shadowed her bright features.

And though too utterly innocent to understand her own feelings Barbara did feel somewhat annoyed and ashamed at what appeared a somewhat senseless and morbid depression of her usually gay spirits.

The roll of vehicles was so monotonous in its frequency that she heeded its progress little, and when at last one stopped decidedly at the door of the mansion she only supposed it was a caller who would be sent from the door with the stereotyped "Not at home."

But after a few minutes had passed she heard steps ascending the stairs, and the door opened to admit Victor Mordant.

His face was pale and haggard, and so expressive of deep suffering that she involuntarily sprang forward and seized his hand in both her palms with the warm affection of a sister in her look and manner.

"Victor, what is it?" she murmured, gently, as she almost guided him to a chair, near which she seated herself in saddened expectation. "Is she—no, it cannot be. It is too sad—too terrible," she began, as Victor still remained in silence.

"You mean is Celia gone?" said the young man, gloomily. "No, not yet; that part of the trial is to come," he added.

"No, no, do not be so despairing, dear Victor," she resumed, as her sweet, earnest eyes were fixed gently on his. "There have been so many singular recoveries from even more hopeless cases than poor Miss Vyvian's; and she is young, and well cared for by attention and skill. Your very love for her makes you too sensitive to the worst. Be comforted, Victor;

she is still in life, and, please Heaven, your grief will be suffered needlessly."

He shivered, and a strange, wild look came in his sunken eyes.

"Barbara, Barbara, spare me; you do not know all or you would hate, despise, instead of pitying and comforting me," he groaned. "I dare not tell you the truth—and yet I am here because you are the only living creature to whom I can look for comfort, or associate with the past—with her."

The girl gazed at him with a kind of idea that his mind was wandering.

"Hush, Victor; you are wrong, you are not doing yourself justice," she returned, softly. "It is this anxiety and grief which is unnerving you so terribly. Of what can you accuse yourself, poor Victor?"

He hesitated for some moments.

"Barbara," he said, in a husky voice, "I dare not tell you, you would hate me, and I am miserable enough without losing my only consolation—I might almost say my only friend on earth."

"No, no, that is impossible, Victor," she said, in her girlish, clear tones; "you could never deserve that, and," she added, more sadly and sweetly, "even if you were in error I could but pity you more then. I would not condemn my childhood's playmate and friend."

"Then I will even cast myself on your mercy—angel that you are," said the young man, in a broken voice. "Barbara, what will you think when I tell you that the agony which tortures me is the terrible certainty that Celia's death would be rather a—relief to the struggle within me than the grief you think. I hate myself—I feel that I am a guilty villain, and yet I cannot crush the viper in my heart. Is it not beyond even your pity and pardon, Barbara? Yes, I see you shrink from me," he added, as the girl involuntarily started at the avowal.

"No, no, I do not, Victor," she said, commanding herself by a strong effort, for she really believed his senses were deranged. "I mourn for you. It is but a proof of your suffering that you can cherish such a fancy."

"No, you are wrong, Barbara; I am in my senses, quite—quite sane," he said, with a melancholy smile, which made his face yet more wan and woeful. "Listen, and you will see how guilty, how base I am. Celia in her generous love has given me the opportunity to acquire the birthright which was taken from me. She has forgiven the coldness of love which ill repaid the boon—nay, she set me free when I found Irene Delancy was withdrawn from a father's control. All this she has done. She merits my deep, true love. And yet, though

this very illness may have been brought on by suppressed anxiety and struggle on my account, I—I feel as if my soul is hardened, as if I should shrink from the woman to whom I am bound by every tie, if—for which I pray on my knees—she be restored to claim my troth. Barbara, is not this madness, such as might well sentence me to general execration—to even your contempt?"

"Victor, it is only because you are too sensitive," returned the girl, gently. "You feel too keenly what Miss Vyvian has done and the claims she has on your love and gratitude. And she will live to win both, dear Victor," she went on, with flushing cheeks. "Yes, I would pray more than ever for her life now, that you may vindicate your honour and your nobleness. You will—you must be happy with a woman that could act thus."

"But," she added, sadly, "if she should be taken from you, be sure that you made her last days happier from your grateful affection and her faith in you. I was sure of it when I saw her on that first evening. I could see her eyes fixed on you—ay, and fancied she felt some annoyance even at your meeting me, poor little Barbara, your child playmate. Dear Victor, think only of that, and be happy, or at least dismist this miserable fancy from your mind."

His eyes were bent on the ground, but there was a calm expression on his face as he listened to her low, soft tones.

"Barbara, I cannot account for the horror that creeps over me when I think of the whole past," Victor said, thoughtfully. "There should surely be some indication of kindred or blood relationship in one of my own family and race even were all other bonds wanting. Yet to me Celia ever appeared a stranger and alien with no trace of our kindred in face or heart or mind. Irene I loved, and you are as dear, sweet sister to me; though so many years have passed since we met; but between Celia and myself there seems an ice barrier that chills up my very soul. Is it some wicked perversity in my nature, Barbara, or is there some deeper cause for the phenomenon?"

"I am no casuist to decide such a knotty point, dear Victor," she returned, with her large, frank eyes fixed on him in the child-like innocence of her nature. "But in any case I am certain that your duty is clear. You are bound to your engagement, which you tell me you have twice confirmed, and whether Celia lives or dies it is for you to lavish on her all the homage and the love which you have pledged. Do not disappoint me," she added, sweetly, "do not let me think I have set up a false ideal of my early playmate, of Irene's lover."

"Not so, not so, Barbara," he said, firmly; "you are touching the right chord now. At least, neither my sweet, pure sister, nor Irene, if she ever bestows a thought on him she once professed to love, shall feel shame that she once looked on Victor Mordant with affection. If I cannot know happiness, I can at least save honour and self respect. And, Barbara," he added, as he rose to take his leave of the gentle girl, "should you ever hear evil reports of me, should it be said that I was a fortune hunter, or false or unfeeling, you will not credit them, you will not distrust my solemn promise that no temptation shall induce me to break my pledge to Celia, unless her death or her own refusal should make it impossible for it to be fulfilled. Let me have this consolation, my friend, my adopted sister."

"You shall, you shall," she replied. "I will never believe evil of you, Victor, save from your own lips; through good or evil report I will trust you as a dear and honoured brother."

Their hands were clasped in earnest confirmation of the pledge, and a very suspicious moisture was in Barbara's eyes, when Lady Roseford suddenly appeared in the apartment, which she had gained with either intentional or accidental noiselessness.

The pair sprang asunder with a very natural though deceptive start.

And the countess received Victor's salutations and apologies for his instant departure with a dignified address that was extremely intelligible and confusing to at least one of the persons concerned.

"My dear, I thought you understood that I decidedly objected to your receiving visitors, especially gentlemen, in my absence," said Lady Roseford, sternly. "I must give fresh orders at the door, I perceive, unless there is more confidence to be placed in your own sense of decorum. And then to allow the freedom I myself witnessed, and from the presumed betrothed of another," she went on, lashing up her indignation as she proceeded. "Really, Lady Barbara, I must say I am exceedingly disappointed in you."

The girl's face flushed with angry pride for a moment at the injustice, then her own sweet look came with its resistless appeal in her features.

She threw her arms round the stately lady's neck, with a loving tenderness in her eyes, as she murmured: "Dear, dear countess, you must think me terribly

guilty to talk so sternly to me, but indeed, indeed, you are mistaken in your blame of your little ward. It was only because Victor is engaged and in such trouble, and we were such early playmates and friends, that I ventured on such apparently glaring improprieties. He is just like a brother to me, you know," she added, pleadingly.

"My love, you are so young and innocent that you do not comprehend the consequences of such useless waste of emotion and time and interest," said the countess, kissing the upturned face with forgiving tenderness. "Remember, I have set my heart on establishing you well; and if any reports of such childish platitudes were to be in the wind, your every chance would be gone. And in simple defence from your own girlish enthusiasm I must actually forbid any more such romantic follies."

Lady Barbara did not argue the point farther; she had a sweet conviction that the said precaution would very probably fail, should Victor actually take means to baffle it.

And for the present the chief result of Lady Roseford's grave warnings was to deepen in the impressionable young heart the interest and meditation which Victor's words excited.

So soon as a thing is needlessly forbidden it is well known that even to the sweetest and purest natures it is apt to give the banned object a charm. And Barbara Fitzalan was no exception to this law of human nature where her old and cherished companion was concerned.

#### CHAPTER XXX.

Her suffering ended with the day,  
Yet lived she at its close,  
And breathed that long, long night away  
In statue-like repose.

But when the sun in all his state  
Illumes the Eastern skies  
Would she wake on earth—or Paradise?

"How is Miss Vyvian to-day?" asked Dr. Fellowes as he entered the anteroom which led to Celia's apartments. "Have you heard lately, my good youth?"

The question was addressed to the favourite page of the patient, the Spanish youth, who had never quitted his post in the anteroom, save for a few brief moments of necessary refreshment, since his mistress's illness. It was his custom at the Rookery to be in waiting at the slightest call, and he persisted in his claims to fulfil that duty now.

Motionless and statue-like he remained till any sound awakened him from his watchful silence, and then his quick glance and rapid, noiseless movement told of his suppressed agitation and suffering.

No wonder that the physicians learned at length to recognize Carlos as one of the most vigilant attendants upon the invalid, and to rely on him in a measure for the last and most accurate bulletins of the sufferer ere they entered the silent, darkened apartment itself.

Carlos nodded his head sadly.

"She is no better—she is worse," he said, in a low, hoarse tone. "She will die unless she should change soon. I see it in her face."

"Then you have entered the room, have you?" asked the doctor, half reprovingly.

"Yes. Why not? I have some lovers in my own land, I fear nothing, and the nurse is terrified sometimes when the darkness comes," replied Carlos, defiantly. "You cannot prevent it, nor a whole college of your leeches."

"Hush, my lad, hush. I respect your devotion to your mistress," said the doctor, soothingly, "but there is danger both to yourself and her by these needless visits. However, I will tell you more positively when I have seen her. Is she sleeping, do you think?"

"She is quiet—helpless," he returned, bitterly. "You are dragging her to the grave with your drugs."

Doctor Fellowes only smiled pityingly at the agitated, convulsed features of the passionate foreigner, and then with a slight, almost imperceptible tap entered the room.

Celia was certainly "quiet," as her page had bitterly pronounced.

She lay on the pillows without the restless movements or the constant mutterings that had marked the earlier stages of her illness.

But her face had a fearfully blue pallor in its hue, and her large dark eyes were simply thrilling in the wild glare that contrasted with the dark, hollow orbs around.

There was, indeed, a sad wreck of the beauty which she had prized and boasted of—all but the splendid hair, which had been hardly saved from destruction by relieving the head of its weight, and which now lay in large tresses like a framework round the white face.

"She is not asleep, she does not sleep," whispered the nurse, as the physician softly questioned her as to her patient. "She lies like that, so it seems

there must be some change in her. It is quite different from the raving she had till yesterday."

Dr. Fellowes nodded and approached the bedside with a cautious step, and felt the pulse, and gazed at the face without appearing to excite any emotion in the patient's mind.

"Are you better? Do you feel any pain this evening, Miss Vyvian?" asked Doctor Fellowes kindly.

She did not reply, save by a slight shudder, and murmured:

"Pain? Yes, but no one must know."

He looked sadly at the nurse.

"I greatly fear that if the life be spared the mind will suffer," he said, cautiously. "The brain has had a strange shock apparently, which has little to do with the fever, and I scarcely dare deal with it in the same manner. You can go on, nurse, with the same treatment for to-night, and in the morning we will see what can be done, in consultation with the other physicians. At any rate, I cannot perceive any immediate danger to life itself from her present condition."

With a half-hopeless shrug of despairing relief, the physician took his leave, and passed through the anteroom with a brief word of assurance and sympathy to his attendant.

Hours went on after his departure. The midnight bell had long chimed, and the small hours of the night were beginning their untrifling, unvarying course, when Carlos rose noiselessly from his post and stole to the door of the invalid's chamber.

There were noises, strange noises, that it needed all his sharp senses and determined will to meet and discover their purport. But ere long Carlos could distinguish the moans of the sufferer from the coarse snoring of the nurse, and he mustered courage enough to open the door and pass into the room.

There was indeed small risk of detection. Mrs. Horner was steeped in a profound and evidently delightful slumber in the luxurious rocking-chair that formed her comfortable resting-place for the night.

Celia was as Doctor Fellowes had seen her, save that the eyelids covered from time to time the glaring eyes, and that the firmly compressed, whitened lips had something less of sharp and fierce resolution in their slight relaxation of the convulsive pressure.

Carlos surveyed her in silence for a few moments.

Her hair was lying on the white pillow, like an inky veil, and he lifted it as if in admiring examination of its massive tresses.

There was, however, more than mere complacent contemplation in his expression as he stood looking down—bending over the sufferer. He raised the coils yet more sharply from the brow, and stooped down to examine the temples and the very roots of the thick hair.

His finger gently traced the outline of a peculiar mark on the white temples.

It was a crescent-shaped, snake-like impression, with the outline of the reptile's head traced in minute but correct clearness.

Carlos hardly replaced the tresses, and then, seizing the lamp that stood on the table, went to the distant mirror, and examined his own broad brow with an earnest, curious gaze.

"Strange," he murmured, "strange, yet there can be no connection—none. I never heard of its presence in any other family or race. I must look into this haphazard. However, there is no time for any farther contemplation now."

And, seizing a glass from the table, the Spaniard drew a phial from his dress, and poured out its contents to the very drops, ere he approached once again the bedside.

"Lady," he said, "Celia—Miss Vyvian—wake up. It is Carlos who calls, and your life, and more than his hangs in the balance. Speak to me, rouse up, or all may be lost."

Something in the tones or the words appeared to reach the wandering senses.

She turned her head as if she could discern the direction from which the voice came.

Then Carlos stooped down once more and whispered something else in her ears, softly, almost inaudibly, but it made its way to the sufferer's senses.

A low, sharp cry seemed to escape her very breast, though it was too instantly muffled by the gentle but firm hand of the Spaniard to attract the attention of or awake the slumbering nurse.

Celia's hands were wildly extended for an instant, but Carlos clasped them in his own, and soothingly murmured more gentle comfortings in the startled ears, which seemed to have some slight influence in calming the terror, albeit her fingers were clenched in his till the nails actually buried themselves in his flesh.

"Celia, all will be safe if you will trust me and be



calm. Obey me, your trusty slave, your worshipper, your guard, and all shall be well," he went on, firmly. "Your life hangs on my efforts, and its future happiness and ease. Pledge yourself to be mine and I will accomplish all."

She understood him now. The strong associations of the past were reviving before her and chasing away the stupor of the fevered brain.

And the bewildered expression gave place to a more intelligent though painfully sharp and agonized look.

"No, no, I dare not, I cannot," she muttered.

"You must," he returned, firmly, "for my sake and your own. Your only safety lies in what I can do, can give. Speak, and at once. I shall set on that one word of reply."

She sighed wearily.

The extreme weakness of mind and body was overcoming her momentary flash of reason.

But, either from unconscious bewilderment, or the real recognition of the dire danger that menaced her, she murmured the groaning, despairing assent that the youth so urgently demanded.

"It is well," he said, soothingly. "Now drink this, dearest. It is worth all the medicines in the doctors' shops. Nay, fear not," he added, as, with a faint glimmering of reason, she somewhat shrank from the glass he held to her lips. "I would die myself a thousand times rather than risk your life."

She put her lips to the glass with a reckless weakness that could scarcely be called submission, and then, as the skilful hand poured the contents gradually down the relaxed throat, she closed her eyes wearily, with a corpse-like rigidity of muscle that was frightfully like that glossy brother of sleep—the unsparring angel of death.

Carlos gazed anxiously on his patient; he felt her pulse and stooped down to listen to the beating of the heart with long and breathless attention; then, with a deep, long sigh, he turned from the bedside, and moved noiselessly and cautiously through the room to his own recognized post.

#### CHAPTER XXXI.

Is thy name Mary, maiden fair?

Such should, methinks it must be.  
The sweetest name that mortals bear  
Were best befitting thee.

And she to whom it once was given  
Was half of earth and half of Heaven,  
Al! while we dream not smiles beguile  
Our hearts are in the snare.

ALL Paris—that is to say musical, fashionable, and gossiping Paris, which might certainly be fairly considered to represent the chief part of the town—of that gay city—was in tremendous excitement.

Albeit it was towards the close of the season, when it might fairly be supposed that the effervescence of the volatile spirits would be like flattened champagne—hopeless to rise to its former liveliness and airy frothiness of vivacity.

But the cause was worthy of the effect.

The dying opera season was to be galvanised into temporary life by a "starring" engagement for a few brief nights of the famous "Magdalen," or, as they called it in more softened tones, "Maddolina."

She was to appear in six representations for three weeks, and each week was to bring a fresh opera on the boards, so that the voracity of the new prima donna's talents would be tested by no ordinary trials.

And, as if to complete her triumphs, the Marquise de Cimier—the most fashionable woman of the season—had invited a supper party after the opera, at which the "Maddolina" was to be present—a compliment rarely paid by that exclusive dame even to the most celebrated and well-known of the queens of song.

"Are you to be at the marquise's to-night?" asked Sir Percy Cowan of Lord Belmont—the identical half-brother of Lord Grantley Neville, whose fraternal sympathies appeared to be so remarkably deadened, whatever might be his sensibilities in other respects.

"Yes, I suppose so," returned the marquis, yawning wearily. "The fact is that there is scarcely anything to do just now over here, and I was just out the wing for London, when this new girl was announced, and it seemed rather 'the thing' to take 'er over the report of her success."

"Or *fiasco*," put in Sir Percy. "Well, really, one ought to have something to induce one to do duty in London this season, for they say that the weather is intolerable, and the only two *debutantes* worth looking at are under a shadow, and everything most terribly commonplace and dull."

"Indeed, what's happened to this girl's you talk of—small pox, or an elopement, or—?" asked Lord Belmont, putting up his glass as a carriage passed them in the "Bois," where the friends were standing.

"No, only a fever to one and a fit of *mal de cœur*, as far as I can make out, to the other," was the

careless reply. "But what on earth are you staring after, Belmont? You look moon struck."

He was, perhaps, right.

Lord Belmont's glass was still eagerly directed to the spot where the carriages usually turn, during their afternoon drive in the "Bois;" and his eyes were literally strained in his attempt to distinguish the movements of the equipage that had passed them.

"Oh, nothing—only I thought I knew the lady in that carriage," returned the marquis, abstractedly. "And yes—by Jove, it is coming back, and she will be on this side."

In truth the equipage was dashing along as swiftly as a pair of thorough-bred English horses and a well-built, light English carriage could carry its fair tenant, and in a few moments it was once more passing the spot where the friends stood.

"By Heavens, what a lovely face!" exclaimed the marquis, enthusiastically. "And—what eyes! It's enough to burn a fellow through a wash-leather waistcoat, or mail armour, eh, Cowan?"

"Wonder who she is," muttered Sir Percy. "Let me see, there's a new Spanish family just come to Maurice's for a few weeks I heard. Shouldn't wonder if it's one of them, by the girl's style. Perhaps we shall meet her to-night at the marquise's. She generally gets the new people directly they are talked of, and long before any one else knows them. Of course you'll be at the opera to-night, marquis?"

"Of course I shall not," was the determined reply. "Couldn't meet the girl at supper after, without being inclined to look for some shifting and curtain dropping. No, I'll see her first as a woman, before I am forced to remember the stage and the singer. Good-bye, Cowan; I'm off to Versailles on business."

And with this rather vague, shadowy excuse the marquis left his companion near the Arc de Triomphe, and, throwing himself into a *cabriolet*, drove off as fast as a double fare could persuade the Frenchman to urge his bony, ill-conditioned steed.

Lord Belmont was among the earlier arrivals at the Marquise de Cimier's on that evening, but still the rooms were sufficiently crowded with guests to make his entrance unobserved amidst the noise and excitement that prevailed.

But among the varied voices, though speaking in a somewhat subdued tone, and in earnest and small groups, he could gather but one subject, the success of the wonderful prima donna of the night.

"Thrilling," "wonderful," "overpowering," were among the adjectives in the mouths of every one.

But so far as the marquis was concerned he did not appear so engrossed in the current topic of the day as in the eager search for the new beauty he had that afternoon discerned in the "Bois." She was not there however, so far as he could discern, and he was just abandoning in half-contempt at himself the chimerical hope of meeting one so apparently unknown, when the door of an inner apartment opened, and the marquis, whom he had not previously perceived, appeared accompanied by a young and lovely girl, the heroine of the afternoon's adventure. But if he had thought her beautiful before in that transient view, when half concealed by the transparent veil, he was far more dazzled now when she appeared in the full light of the saloon and in the exquisite though simple toilet of the evening.

She was, as Sir Percy had said, extremely Spanish in her appearance so far as hair and eyes and complexion were concerned. But the full, rosy lips, that had yet a sweet pensiveness in their expression, the faultless teeth, the rounded form had something English in their air, which redeemed the face from its entirely foreign aspect, and gave her the charms of the two nations in her own proper person.

Lord Belmont was perhaps even less petrified by the beauty than by the grace and high-bred air of the girl, which, combined with the distinction accorded to her by the marquis, seemed to bespeak her birth and position to be as distinguished as her attractions.

Supper was commenced immediately upon the advent of the ladies on the scene, and he could not satisfy himself at the instant as to her name and origin. But fate, which seemed so adverse to him in the earlier moments of the evening, befriended him at last.

By accident or design he found himself at one side of the lovely stranger, though not licensed by an introduction even to address her or detach her attention from the cavalier who was her appointed attendant, till a slight *contretemps* enabled him to rescue her rich dress from the captivity occasioned by the awkwardness of a domestic and procure him a smile and bow from his fascinating neighbour.

"May I hope that I find one point of agreement between yourself and me, signorina?" he said, venturing to use this very slender bridge to an introduction. "I fancy from your not alluding to the circumstance in my hearing that you, like myself, have not been to the opera to-night."

The girl gave an inquiring look, as if to ascertain whether he could be in jest or earnest ere she replied, in her soft, liquid, Southern tones.

"I fear I must be candid enough to confess that I was at the performance. Is it a crime in your eyes?" she said, in somewhat foreign French.

"Certainly not—I am not quite so demented," he returned, smiling in his secret delight at this commencement of the dialogue. "But yet you are not like the rest of the guests, actually delicious at the extraordinary appearance of a new prima donna, whom, by the way, I do not distinguish at this table," he added, glancing around. "And yet the supper is supposed to be in her honour."

A scornful look passed over the lovely girl's face as Lord Belmont spoke, which seemed to him a tacit endorsement of what he averred.

"I see you agree with me," he went on. "It is a great mistake to puff up these public characters, as is the fashion of the day. Why, it is not so long since my brother, Lord Grantley Neville, nearly lost his life for the sake of that wonderful Norma, about whom such fabulous tales were told. Indeed, he only escaped as by a miracle, so far as I understand. It ought to be a lesson to beware of such syrens—do you not think so, signorina?"

"Very likely," returned the stranger, coldly. "Was it the celebrated Neapolitan singer to whom you allude, my lord?"

"Certainly. Did you ever hear her?" he cried.

"I have heard many of the famous singers. I am exceedingly fond of music," she returned. "But no doubt there is an unfortunate and critical life, without a stable hold on any one class, any position, any sympathies. You judge them correctly, my lord."

"I am delighted to obtain your assent to this doctrine of mine," exclaimed Lord Belmont, rapturously. "Yet if I were to express all I feel to-night as to the power of beauty and grace over a man's heart I should seem but a traitor to my sentiments. I have been a perfect stone—only looking on the other sex as possible certain evils that I must one day encounter. My delusion is swept away as by a sunbeam, perhaps to my certain misery."

Her large, brilliant eyes were turned inquiringly on him without one ingredient of coquetry in their glance.

"Does your lordship mean to imply that you have suffered during your sunny existence?" she asked, with a singular expression in look and tone.

"Perhaps not; but I can feel the capability of sorrow now," he replied. "I have never been drawn towards woman before, though I have been free as air in the direction of my inclinations. My hour has come at last."

There was a grave, half-contemptuous coolness in her tone as she replied.

"I ought to mistake your meaning and insist on a different and clearer explanation; but I am no coquette, and I do not suppose your lordship would talk to a stranger—a lady—of private concerns and feelings entirely unconnected with her."

"Perfectly right, fair signorina," he returned. "I grant such a mode of proceeding would be but an idiotic madness. Your autocracy has discovered the truth. It only remains for your candour to equal your penetration."

"Oh, I can scarcely see that to be needful," said the fair stranger, calmly. "It is entirely your own choice that you are conversing with me at this moment. Whatever may be your wishes, I am surely exempt from receiving the confessions to which you allude."

"Not if you could comprehend all I wish to know and say," he replied, in a low tone. "There is a fascination in my present position and feelings that I would never before have credited could be felt by my common-place self. Surely you will take pity on me," he added, "and give me some hint of your identity—your name—that we may converse on rather more equal grounds. I am the Marquis of Belmont, an English nobleman," he went on. "May I know with whom I am conversing?"

"There ought to be little difficulty in getting a proper introduction to any of the Marquises de Cimier's guests," she returned, evasively; "though from what you said just now, my lord, that presentation is not actually patent to all, even where a public character is concerned. If I understood you aright, you could not distinguish the 'Maddolina' among the company."

"That is not so very remarkable, since I never even saw a picture of her," he returned, "and could only judge of her identity by her manner and the sort of homage that would be paid to a prima donna who is the rage. Do you perceive her, signorina?"

"No, certainly not," was the significant reply.

"And yet you have probably seen her or her picture?" he resumed.

"Yes, I have seen one that was believed to be her very image," said the stranger.

"Was it very beautiful?" asked the marquis. "We women are no judges of our own sex," she replied, carelessly. "Possibly you might think so, my lord."

"I suppose you would imply that you do not admire the Maddolina," he returned. "However, it is idle to speak of her or any other celebrity in the present instance, when she must be so utterly eclipsed. Senorina, I would ask rather, will you sanction my obtaining an introduction, a right to know you, to push my daring admiration with more decorum and respect than its avowal would now betray?"

"May I ask, in my turn, whether you would pay as respectful a homage to the new celebrity, the prima donna?" she asked, haughtily.

"It would be but an insult, I should consider, to place you on a level with her, fair inquisitor," said the marquis, blandly. "You are only testing me to prove whether it is a light and vulgar homage I would pay you, such as these public characters, who may be considered public property, are presumed to excite."

"I asked a simple, honest question," she answered. "And if I have no reply to it I shall scarcely be warranted in satisfying your lordship's curiosity as to my identity and position."

"You comprehend, at any rate, the full claims you possess to tyranny over your admirers," he said, in a tone in which pique and amusement were strangely mingled. "Well, then, I will confess that I might fall in what perhaps your *esprit de corps* as to your sex and claims might call strict propriety," he admitted, after a pause. "Yet I will so far yield the argument that I confess were she capable of winning on my hard heart, as I have discovered it can be moved, I might, even I might fall a reluctant victim to a power that I could simply not resist. Now, having confessed, may I not know, or at least inquire the name and the country of my—of—yourself, in short?"

There was a flash of haughty disdain, that was strangely quenched in a bland, sweet smile ere it was well observed by her companion, and then, with a slightly lowered voice, and quick, arch glance of her speaking eyes, she said:

"Your sincerity can soon be tested, my lord. I am the despised celebrity, the Maddolina!"

(To be continued.)

## THE YOUNG LOCKSMITH.

### CHAPTER XVII.

THESE events transpired in the days prior to the period of grand "Expositions," when the fairs of industrial and agricultural associations were in their infancy, and had not reached the importance that attach to the great national exhibitions of our time.

Still this contemplated show of the Institute of Mechanics and Arts was, at that time, a very notable affair; and tens of thousands of people flocked to see the grand display.

The endorsement by this society of a new invention, or a mechanical discovery possessing real merit, was then a valuable and desirable testimonial in the hands of the ambitious, enterprising artisan; and the contributor who was able to carry away the gold medal of this institute, over all competitors, was a very lucky man; for upon the declaration being made public the recipient of this leading prize entered at once upon the high road to success.

There were present at the exhibition a goodly show of samples in the Iron Safe Department, and several different patterns of new and old locks were attached. Some were excellent, a few very good, and two or three better specimens than the rest, in this class of manufactures.

For some years there had been one popular lock, which had stood the test of time, and which really possessed very extraordinary merit in its way. But this lock had been forced, on more than one occasion, by burglars, to the dear cost of its possessors.

Samples of this lock were on exhibition upon this occasion, and hitherto its owner had been successful in bearing off the first premium for his so-called "Safety Lock." The inventor was now on the spot—quiet, confident, pleasant, and altogether indifferent to the efforts of his rivals, whom he had hitherto triumphed over.

Indeed his contrivance was a very superior one, and he had realized largely upon its sale. He was rich through his success with this "Premium Safety Lock," and when approached upon the subject of locks he showed himself a thorough master of his trade.

The rumour had got abroad, however, a few days before the exhibition opened, that this confident lock-maker and inventor had at last encountered a rival, who would compete this year for the society's gold medal, and that he must "look to his laurels."

He smiled at this friendly warning. He had been too long in the business, and had been far too successful to be alarmed at this announcement, or to fear the efforts of neophytes and locksmith apprentices just out of their time. No he!

Shortly after the opening of the exhibition this undaunted and hitherto fortunate inventor found his way, as was his custom during the exhibitions, into the great hall where his own and numerous other specimens of good work in his line were being displayed to the best advantage. And meeting the head of the noted firm of safe manufacturers, Mr. Powers, with whom he had largely dealt, the subject of his profession was directly introduced.

"Ah, Mr. Jones!" said Powers, "well met. How are you to-day?"

"Never better, Mr. Powers. A fine show you've got here this year," responded Mr. Jones, pleasantly. "And how are they getting on?"

"Nicely. The exhibition promises well, sir. I've just left the department where our safes are placed—upon two of which we have your locks, which we've used so long."

"Well, I s'pose we have the usual amount of competition this season, Mr. Powers?"

"Yes. The committee on locks and safes have been examining the contributions in our department this morning," continued Powers.

"Yes? Well, they'll agree upon the old story, I suppose. I've taken their first prizes four years, over all comers, and I fancy they'll follow in the footsteps of their illustrious predecessors, in committees, who have awarded the 'Jones's Safety' the palm heretofore."

"Well, I'm not upon the lock committee."

"No. They're all good men, nevertheless, and know their business. They understand what a good lock is, Mr. Powers."

"I think so," said Powers.

"To be sure they do," added Jones, "and they know my lock well."

"Yes. There is one lock here, this year, however," continued the head of the safe firm, "which promises to become a stout rival for all the old ones—a very curiously contrived and I think a valuable invention."

"New?" asked Jones, indifferently.

"Entirely novel," said Powers. "We have had one of them placed on our largest safe, here, by the patentee; and he prides himself on his achievement in this lock—the first one he has produced, which he calls perfect."

"What's his name?"

"Corson."

"Ah, yes. Edward Corson?"

"That's the name."

"I've heard of him. He was an apprentice to old Boissey, the locksmith."

"Yes. Boissey says he's clever."

"Exactly. Boissey's a fair smith, in our line. But he's only a practical commonplace workman. He possesses no genius for construction, and never produced anything original, that I've heard of."

"This apprentice of Boissey is a different sort of man, I promise you, Mr. Jones. He's a very talented fellow; and I shouldn't wonder if this new lock of his should beat you all."

"Pshaw—you don't say so!" exclaimed Jones, with a sneer. "Well, if this boy can beat us, so easy, with his first production, he must be a remarkable young mechanic. I've seen so many of 'em break down in my time, however, that they never trouble me much, I assure you, with their new-fangled jim-cracks."

"He won't break down, then—mark my word, Mr. Jones. His new lock is a triumph, in my judgment."

"You like it, eh?" asked Jones.

"I think it an admirable contrivance, sir."

"And you'll 'go in for Corson,' then, I suppose?"

"I don't know about that. Your locks are very superior, I am aware."

"So you've always allowed."

"They've been picked, nevertheless, you know."

"Once or twice, yes—by experts in burglary, I know. But they've stood the general test bravely, notwithstanding."

"That's right, Mr. Jones. But Corson calls his new invention the 'Burglar-proof Bank and Safe Lock,' and assumes that it cannot be picked by anybody."

"Assumes! There you have it in one word. These novices always assume a vast deal. I've been in the trade nigh on to twenty years. I've met with a great deal of unwarranted assumption among young lock-makers. I'm not a professional lock-picker. But I can pick any lock in Christendom, give me time and my own tools."

"Possibly you can, Mr. Jones."

"Of course I can. Let's go and take a look at 'em," said Jones, drawing Powers away towards the safe and lock section of the exhibition.

The two men soon stood in the front of the ranges

of great iron chests, in which department of the show they were mutually interested.

When they opened the safe upon which Ned's lock was placed Mr. Jones turned his eye to the spot where the lock was then usually a fixed upon safes, to observe a perfectly plain polished piece of steel, imbedded in the inner iron casing, and this was all. At the outside the covering was similar, though the experienced hand of this old inventor shortly discovered its blinded key-hole as he flattened a small spring at the side, which started the shield disguising this aperture. But the interior of the lock could not be got at, nevertheless.

"Well, what do you make of Corson's lock?" asked Powers, who had watched the old fellow as he worked over the safe and was moving away.

"Oh, it's all out of sight," said Jones. "I think it's nothing new. Probably an infringement upon my old inventions and those of other makers in a new coat—that's all."

"I think not," said Powers.

"You've examined it then?"

"Oh, yes. It is entirely unlike anything of its kind I've ever met with. And I've seen them all, Mr. Jones."

"I s'pose so," replied Jones.

And once more he turned to the big safe, to farther investigate this mysterious innovation in locks.

"Well, what do you make of it, Mr. Jones?" inquired Mr. Powers, as he observed the old inventor studiously poring over the Corson lock.

"Well, I don't see anything yet that interests me very greatly, sir."

"You haven't seen anything at all of the internal arrangements of this contrivance, have you?"

"No; but I imagine it is no great shakes. What is said about it, do you hear?"

"Not much. It is new. Few persons have had the chance to examine it, critically, so far."

"Well, you know my style, Mr. Powers. I've done this before, and I still hold to the same proposition, open to all comers, which I have offered hitherto in those exhibitions where I have always been the winner, you know."

"What is that, Mr. Jones?"

"In any one of your safes upon which my locks are placed I am ready to deposit one hundred pounds. Any competitor who likes to enter the arena with me, and place a similar sum within a safe upon which his lock is attached, can have the opportunity publicly to test the comparative safety merits of our inventions, upon the conditions I have heretofore challenged competitors in this business—namely, that he who first opens the other's safe takes both deposits."

"I remember. And you have always been successful, I think."

"Yes. Where is this young locksmith?"

"I haven't seen him here at all."

"He knows the 'Jones Safety Lock' I presume?"

"Oh, yes. Everybody knows you are a leader in this line—at least up to this time."

"And that's what I intend to continue to be, sir," said Jones, with a flourish. "Perhaps your young friend would like to test this thing upon my terms?"

"Why, young Corson hasn't got a hundred pounds! He couldn't go into any such arrangement as you suggest, if he were ever so willing. It's no offence to be poor, but he isn't able to run any such risk as this."

"But you are lauding his 'invention,' as you call this thing, and you have allowed him to put his lock upon the handsomest safe you ever built! Come. You can afford this. What if you lose? I shall be the gainer again, and I make this challenge—open to you or any other puffer of the new lock."

"Oh, we don't do anything of that sort, Mr. Jones. It's not in our line of business, you know."

"That shows me how much confidence you have in this lock, Mr. Powers. I'm satisfied now. You know what my locks are. But if Mr. Corson would like to try this thing on, and can put his hundred pounds in your safe here, I will deposit the same sum in another, for the trial of the real merits of the two locks."

"You don't know what his lock is, Mr. Jones."

"And I don't care! I know mine. He shall have the opportunity to examine mine at his leisure. I will lock your safe, in his and your presence, after depositing the money. I will give him my key, and he may operate with that, and as many more as he chooses to employ—he giving me his key, and the same privilege. We'll go to work, here, at the same moment. The man who gets into the other's safe first, with any ordinary locksmith's tools, shall take the other's money. This is fair, isn't it?"

"Yes. But young Corson's got no hundred pounds to put in, I imagine," said Powers.

"No. I expect not. He's too sharp to try that thing with an old inventor. He probably knows that I've beat 'em all, heretofore."



"Very likely," said Powers. "But here he is himself. Do you know him?"

"Never saw him. I've heard of him though." And at this moment Ned approached and bade Mr. Powers good-day. That gentleman at once introduced Mr. Corson to Mr. Jones, remarking that the latter was "the well-known safe-lock inventor."

"Oh, I've heard of Mr. Jones frequently," said Ned.

"And creditably, I hope, young man," remarked Mr. Jones, patronisingly.

"Very, sir. And I know your lock well too."

"I suppose so. It is pretty generally known among locksmiths—most of whom have got ideas from my invention, to twist up with their own, for the production of what they are pleased to claim originality on!" said the old fellow, sharply. "You have got up a new lock, young man, I hear?" he continued.

"Yes, sir. It is upon one of Messrs. Powers & Small's nice safes here on exhibition."

"I have been talking with Mr. Powers about you to-day. I submitted a proposition to him, as your lock is upon his safe alongside of two or three of mine. You think very well of your lock, and so does Mr. Powers. I would like to test your skill, and the respective merits of our locks, young man."

"In what way, sir?" asked Ned, modestly.

"Any way you like. I propose what I've offered before; and have always won on, sir."

The challenge made to Powers was then explained to Ned, who listened to its details attentively, and replied:

"I don't know how long it would take me to get into a safe secured with one of your locks, Mr. Jones, for I make no pretensions to being an expert in burglarious operations! But I do undertake to say that you can't get into a safe fastened with one of my locks—nor any one else, without my aid—at all, sir! I call my invention the 'Burglar-proof Safe-Lock.' That's what I contend it is, Mr. Jones!"

"Well, that is modest, to say the least of it, young man," rejoined Jones, petulantly.

"But I mean what I say, sir, nevertheless."

"Well—what answer have you to my challenge?"

"I'm sorry to say I don't possess the hundred pounds at present, to deposit as you suggest, sir. If I did, I'd put them in though without hesitation. I hope to earn reputation and money both by-and-by, however, by means of my invention. And some day I'll accommodate you, Mr. Jones. I'm not afraid to undertake the contest you now propose, but I haven't any hundred pounds to embark in the enterprise."

"Make it fifty then, young man."

"I would rather name five thousand, sir," said Ned, "if I had the money."

"I wish you had it," replied Jones, with a laugh.

"It would please me vastly! However, I would like to test this thing. I must keep my hand in. Can't you raise the fifty, young man? If your new invention is as valuable as my old one is, you'd have no difficulty in raising ten times that amount upon your patent alone, for I hear your lock is patented."

"Yes, of course it is," rejoined Ned. And suddenly he thought of old Captain Blount.

"How long will you keep this challenge open, Mr. Jones?" asked Ned.

"As long as you like. It is never closed, for that matter. I have always kept this offer before the public. And I've won every time, so far, young man."

"I will give you a definite answer, here at noon to-morrow, sir. Will you be up here, Mr. Powers?" he concluded, turning to that gentleman.

"Yes, with pleasure. I shall be very happy to witness the trial of skill between you two gentlemen—both of whom I know have produced most excellent locks, so totally unlike each other. It will all be conducted in a friendly way, of course?"

"Oh, yes," said Jones. "Why, Mr. Powers, competition's the very life of trade, and I must keep up the reputation of my lock. I contend, in this instance, with one more new one, that's all. I aim to excel them all you know."

"I know it. In the result of this case I shall feel a marked interest, however, I assure you, Mr. Jones."

"Well, we'll try it, I hope," added Mr. Jones.

"And if you do," said Ned, good naturedly, "may the best lock win. I will give you an answer to-morrow, sir."

They shook hands and parted.

Ned started that afternoon for the residence of old Blount, and in a few words explained to him the object of his unexpected return.

"I must go back to-morrow, captain. But I wanted to consult you about this little affair. I know the Jones safe-lock. It is a good one. Mine is what I claim it to be."

"And did you accept the old buffer's challenge?" asked Blount, at once.

"I couldn't, except conditionally. I had no hundred pounds to deposit in his safe. He wants that sum to be put in each safe, locked with one of our respective locks, to test the question of comparative safety. Then he and I are to go at each other's lock, and the man who gets into the first of the two safes takes both sums of money."

"That's fair, and offers another good chance for you, Ned."

"But not for him, captain."

"Why not, pray?"

"I may be able to get into his safe; I don't know about that. But he can't get into mine—unless he blows open the lock with powder—if he pecks away at it till doomsday."

"Good! You know about it all. Give him the trial. Let him have it. As to the result that is his lookout about the getting in. Beat him, my boy. Here's a cheque for two hundred pounds. Go back and don't let him dodge you. Accept his challenge and I'll be there at the trial. When will it come off?"

"At once, I presume. The exhibition closes on Saturday night."

"I'll go up with you in the morning, then."

"Thank you; you are very kind, captain. But I shall want the use of this money only for a day or two."

"Go ahead, my boy. Here's Katy—she wants to see you."

"Aren't you going to invite us girls up to the exhibition, Ned?" asked Katrin, entering at this moment.

"Yes, of course; but you must go directly. The exhibition closes next Saturday. To-day is Tuesday."

"We'll all hands be up at the trial," said Captain Blount.

"What trial?" asked Katrin.

This matter was then explained to her.

"That will be very nice, unless Ned is vanquished, captain," she replied, smiling.

"Ah, I've no fears about that, Katy."

"I know you're very confident concerning your invention, but other people can make bank-locks, can't they, as well as Master Edward Corson, eh?"

"We shall see all about that, Katy, by-and-by."

And it was so concluded. Next morning the captain and Ned went together; the girls followed the next day after, and all were present at the exhibition in good season.

Among the attendants also came old Boissey, who watched the proceedings with the deepest interest.

#### CHAPTER XVIII.

MR. JONES was in the exhibition hall two hours before Ned and the captain arrived, anxiously looking for the young locksmith, who he thought might dodge him.

When he made his appearance, however, he met him cordially, and was introduced to Blount. Powers entered soon after, and the quartette of new acquaintances proceeded to business.

"Well, young man, what is your answer to my proposal of yesterday?" asked Jones, civilly.

"I accept it, Mr. Jones."

"For a deposit of fifty pounds?"

"A hundred," said Ned.

"Ah, that is better—that's worth working for. Glad you raised the money, though it'll be rather a costly lesson for you, young gentleman. However, we must pay for our education. You are getting yours now."

And the old inventor at once drew from his well-filled pocket-book a hundred-pound note as his proposed deposit.

"I suppose you don't care to make it two hundred?" suggested Ned, modestly.

"Yes, indeed, with all my heart, if you say so," replied Jones, opening the wallet again.

"Make it more, Ned, my boy," said Captain Blount, in his earnest manner. "Make it five hundred. Why not?"

Ned smiled. Jones looked at Blount askance, and then asked:

"Are you a lockmaker, sir?"

"No; but my young friend here is. He's got the best lock in the world, he thinks, and so do I. But, unluckily, he hasn't got as much money as you and I have, Mr. Jones. Make it five hundred pounds for your deposit, and he can furnish this sum on the spot. I'll back him. If he wins, he'll have a little ready capital to commence business on. If he don't he shan't lose anything. Make it five, Mr. Jones, unless you're frightened already."

"Not much!" exclaimed Jones, bristling up. "Why, captain, you're really a man after my own heart. Five hundred be it! I fancy you're not ac-

quainted with the 'Jones Safety Lock' though and its maker?"

"No; but I know this young man," said Blount, "like a book. And I fancy that we shall all find, before we get through with this little job, that what Ned Corson don't know about locks and locksmithery ain't worth so much to the mechanical world as some folks imagine!"

"Five hundred it is then. Come, gentlemen, let us make our deposits at once, and to-morrow morning we'll have our personal friends here and proceed quickly to ascertain which of all the safe-locks upon exhibition here is really the safest."

"All right. Come, Ned, my boy," said the captain, jocularly, "come along. I've got the money right here. I had an eye to this when we went to the bank this morning."

And in presence of Messrs. Powers & Small, Captain Blount and old Boissey—who had been sent for to witness the first act in the contest—five hundred pounds were duly deposited by each of the contestants, respectively, in two of the Powers safes; upon one of which was affixed the "Jones Safety," and on the other the "Corson Burglar-proof Safe-lock."

Each of the rivals then closed the safe containing his money, locked it, the keys of each were passed to his competitor, and all the parties retired to partake of a pleasant dinner, upon the invitation of Messrs. Powers & Small, the safe manufacturers, who entered into the spirit of this affair with great zest.

"One of you gentlemen will earn five hundred pounds pretty easily in this business," said Powers, during the sumptuous repast they all joined in.

"And I fancy I know who it'll be," replied Jones, confidently. "I've been there before, gentlemen, in this kind of undertaking; and I have never seen the safe I couldn't get into, in a few hours at most."

"I don't know how long I shall be about getting into yours, Mr. Jones," rejoined Ned, "but if you ever find your way into mine, I'm a mistaken man in my calculations and estimation of the secretive principles of locksmithing mechanism. I know well what little I do know, sir, of my profession."

"Ah, well, young man, you've got a heap to learn yet about good safe-locks, I can tell you. This will prove a lesson to you, at any rate, and it will do you good."

"I hope so, sir. Five hundred pounds earned in my first lesson will do me good."

"It is you, youngster, who is to win, then?"

"I think so."

"Well, well! We shall see."

"I would like to make one suggestion," said Ned, "in regard to the form of proceedings to-morrow."

"All right. Anything you wish."

"I propose that we shall draw lots for precedence in the mode of our operations on the two safes. One of us shall commence upon the other's lock, and open it as soon as he can effect an entrance. His competitor shall follow him upon the other, after the first shall have worked nine hours, say; and the man who occupies the least time in the work shall be entitled to the two sums deposited in the chests."

"That is just as well," said Jones; "I accept this with pleasure. Your nine hours named will cover one day's time—from the opening morning hour to the close, at evening."

"Yes, sir," said Ned. "This will afford us a fair trial. In the event that he does not effect an entrance within that time, then the other shall try his luck upon the other's safe."

"I understand. This is sufficient," said Jones.

They accordingly drew lots before leaving the hotel where they dined, and in this toss-up Mr. Jones was awarded the first chance at the trial.

"You see, young man," observed Jones, "how my luck runs. I always triumph in these little bouts, and I'm used to good fortune. However, cheer up! If you've got half as good a safe-lock as you think you have you'll do well enough. There's room enough for us all in this world, but I can't allow anybody to get ahead of me."

"You're right, sir. I've got a good thing in my lock, and if you can pick it without my assistance, you can beat me—that's all."

The little party separated on the best possible terms and next day the contestants were on hand at an early hour in the exhibition room, where their friends all met; and a goodly number of mechanics, safemakers, and others had collected also, to be witnesses to the interesting feat about to be performed by these two experts, the fact that this "battle of the locks" was to come off there having been made generally known the day previously.

Mr. Jones was really a very skilful and experienced mechanic.

His lock, as now improved and perfected, had long held a first position in the market, and it was deservedly considered a good one.

He took off his coat at nine o'clock in the morning,

and went systematically to work on the "little job before him," as he pleasantly termed it—to wit, the opening of the big safe that was fastened with Corson's new lock—and remarked that he thought "he wouldn't detain the lookers-on over an hour, at most."

He took from his pocket the key which Ned had furnished him with, smiled complacently upon his competitor, the Committee of Safe-Lock Judges, and the crowd that had gathered round him and went at it manfully.

Ned stood by, watching Jones's movements with a keen eye, but remained perfectly calm and self-possessed, as the old expert examined his work, applied the key that belonged to Ned's invention, and twisted, turned, wrenched, or otherwise performed his changes of manipulation upon the burglar-proof safe-lock.

The jolly captain watched the operator as attentively, and old Boissay kept his eye on him quite as sharply as did Ned.

But Jones had his work all to himself, and the eyes of his friends and admirers followed his movements with momentarily increasing zealous scrutiny.

Thus he worked for four long hours!

Noon came, and Jones hadn't made the first noticeable impression upon Corson's patent lock, nor had he got any nearer to opening the great safe, in reality, than when he first sat down before it.

No one offered any suggestions, but the bystanders occasionally dropped a remark among themselves.

"He's got more'n he bargained for," said one.

"Oh, he'll do it, after a while," was the answer.

"He hasn't done much toward it yet though!"

"He'll burst it before he quits it," said a third.

And so for two hours more Jones applied the skeleton key to the hole, then the spiral steel wires, then the true key again; but all to no purpose. Forceps, pincers, magnets, steel needles and levers, thinned cold chisels—every device was used, and changed and applied, again and again—but "Time!" was called at six o'clock, and Jones fell back, tired out with his exertion and excited at his non-success, as his nine hours of persistent trial ended, and he found himself as far outside of that safe as when he commenced his work at nine o'clock in the morning of that day!

"That's a good safe-lock, young man!" said Jones, frankly, rising from his temporary defeat. "It beats me, so far. I can open it, after a while, nevertheless. But it's your turn now. Try your hand at mine to-morrow—as we agreed. And then we'll see."

"I am not disappointed, Mr. Jones. I felt very confident you could not get into it."

The crowd murmured, the spectators retired, and next day at nine in the morning a throng had gathered to see what Ned would do in his attempt to pick Jones's famous safety lock.

(To be continued.)

## LADY CHETWYND'S SPECTRE.

### CHAPTER XXIII.

BEHIND a row of tall potted orange trees in the conservatory Gilbert Monk, after receiving the news that Bernice had quitted Mawr Castle, and had doubtless found her way to Chetwynd Park, ensconced himself, to think over the ill news and consider what he should do.

From the low rustic seat upon which he had flung himself he could look into the bright drawing-room and hear the low murmur of voices.

It seemed as if the fates were playing into his hands that night.

While he lurked in the great conservatory Sylvia sat in a low chair before the fire, her gay bit of woollen embroidery on her knee, the soft light falling in a flood upon her swarthy, handsome face, red cheeks, and glossy black hair, conscious that she was looking her best, and presenting a pretty picture to the long homeless young lord.

"I am glad to be back again," said the marquis, his grave brows shadowed by his ceaseless unrest and bitter longings. "I thought in Abyssinia that I would give all I owned to transport myself in an instant back to this dear old home. But now that I am here I find that I carry in my bosom the same restless soul. I have lain in the bottom of my boat and looked up at the great golden stars above the Blue Nile, and dreamed of home and the dear old Park, with its shady nooks, its ponds, its cool avenue, until my longing to be here was almost more than I could bear. And now I am here, in the rooms she brightened with her joyous presence, and the pain of being here is greater than I could have dreamed. It seems as if Bernice were near me, Sylvia. I have never had that strange sense of the nearness of her presence since I lost her. It seems as if she were in these rooms—as if she might appear to me at any moment—as if I might hear her voice calling me."

"That is very natural and very easily explained," said Sylvia, in her smooth, silvery voice. "You left this place so soon after dear Bernice's death that her presence still seemed, as one might say, to pervade the house. You come back after a long absence, and everything reminds you of her. You have not grown used to the house without her."

"Still I ever get used to the house without her?" asked Lord Chetwynd, in an impassioned voice.

"The edge of our grief must wear off some time," said Sylvia, softly. "It must lose its first sharpness, and become a vague and tender memory. And this is merciful, else the world would be full of mourners, and all the necessary work would be left undone."

"Ah, yes," said Chetwynd, gloomily, "work is necessary. I have come home to work, Sylvia. Perhaps in the consciousness of duties well done I may find a measure of peace. At any rate, work is a safe refuge. It is nobler to work than to spend one's time in selfish indulgence of grief, and I have come back to do what I can for others, forgetting myself. I shall rebuild the poorer cottages of Chetwynd-by-the-Sea after model plans, and I am going to found a memorial school in honour of my lost wife. I shall call it the 'Bernice Chetwynd School,' and make a sufficient endowment to educate twenty girls. Bernice loved to help the poor. At St. Kilda every one loved her, and she was welcome as sunshine in the poorest cottage. You remember that she died of fever, caught in Martin's cottage while she was visiting his sick family. And in memory of her I shall make poor children my especial charge. I shall educate twenty girls, supplying the vacancies as fast as they occur with new pupils, and train these girls—not to talk French or play the piano, Sylvia, but to read, to sew, to manage a household—in short, to fit poor young girls to take care of themselves in a respectable manner. The work I have planned, you see, is not at all ambitious—only to make of poor orphan girls self-helpful, honest, respectable women, with good principles, and a desire to be something better and nobler than women of their class usually are."

It was evident that the young lord began to feel an interest in the work he was planning.

"I should delight in such work," sighed Sylvia.

"How Bernice would have loved to foster such a school. I wish that her mantle might fall upon me, that I too might make people better and happier."

Her little affectation of humility was very effective. Lord Chetwynd's heart warmed toward her, with a quickening of his fraternal affection for her.

"We will work together, Sylvia," he said, kindly.

Sylvia lifted her heavy eyelids, and a red sparkle was seen in the dull gloom of her eyes.

"I wish it might be so, Roy," she said, with seeming sorrow, "but it cannot. I love Chetwynd Park, and all the people upon the estate. This is the only home I have in all the wide world. But I must leave it. I am going away soon, next week if possible, and I shall never return again."

"Why is this, Sylvia? Why should you leave your home?"

"Ah, that is it!" cried Sylvia, passionately. "It is not my home. I have no right here. I have stayed on during your absence to look after your household, but I am no longer needed. And so, Roy, I am going to advertise for a situation as governess."

"Impossible! You a governess, Sylvia?"

"Yes, I. Does it seem so strange? I have no home but this, and when I leave this, and forsake your kind bounty, Roy, I must earn my own living."

Chetwynd was surprised and bewildered.

"Why should you leave the Park?" he asked. "I am at a loss to comprehend why you should desire to go. Do not the servants treat you with respect? Is not your authority recognized? Why is the Park less fitted to be your home than during the past year?"

Sylvia drooped her head.

"Because," she said—"because you are here."

"But I was here two years ago."

"That was different. I was betrothed to you then. Can you not see, Roy? Do you not understand? You force me to speak plainly. I do not love a life of drudgery. I shrink in horror from the existence of a governess. I cannot bear the toils, the hardship, the insults, the cool insolence, heaped upon the governess—I who adore ease, luxury and quiet. I love these dainty rooms, the attendance of servants, treatment such as is accorded to a superior or equal. I love to bask in the sunlight, as I am doing now, to wear silken stuffs and jewels, to live, in short, the life of a wealthy lady, as I have always lived. But I must give them all up. I have no claims upon you, Roy, and I can no longer live upon your bounty. Besides," and Sylvia's

voice trembled with the consciousness that she was playing her last card now, "my good name is my most cherished possession. Roy, it is in truth all I have, and people talk because I remain here."

"What do they dare to say to the presence of my step-sister in my house?"

"They say," replied Sylvia, drooping her head still lower, "that I was once betrothed to you, and that you jilted me. They say that—that I love you still, and that I am staying on here in hopes to win you. And so I must go, Roy. I could not stay on here so long as a spark of true womanhood remains in me. And so—and so—I'm going."

She covered her face and seemed to sob in an utter humiliation and anguish.

Chetwynd sprang up and paced the floor. He loved her, as we have said, with a brother's affection. All his chivalrous instincts were aroused. He pitied her with all his soul, and his cheeks burned in sympathy with her supposed humiliation.

"These social harpies and gossip-mongers will drive you from your rightful home, or else they will drive me away," he cried. "I wish I had not come back."

"I will not be the cause of your exile. It is not for the owner of Chetwynd Park to remain away, but it is the interloper who must go," said Sylvia, bitterly. "If you go, Roy, I shall go also."

Chetwynd quickened his hurried pacing to and fro.

"There is only one way in which you can or will remain, I suppose," he exclaimed, impetuously, "and that is—as my wife!"

"Oh, Roy!" cried Miss Monk, capriciously arresting her head in a serpent fashion, her dull eyes burning with lambent flames, her red cheeks flaming into deeper carnation.

For an instant Chetwynd paused bewildered. Miss Monk waited for him to say more. He comprehended that his unguarded outburst had been interpreted as a half-proposal of marriage. Recovering himself, he said, with unconscious sternness:

"Sylvia, I never loved but once. My heart is buried with my wife. All my hopes rest in her coffin. I am like some vessel that has been tossed upon a rocky shore a disabled wreck. I had ambitions—they are past. I was full of hope—my hopes are dead. I looked forward to nothing save my reunion with her. It would be wicked to ask you to marry me, to tie your bright young womanhood to a heart so worn and weary as mine. I love you with a brother's love only. Bernice in heaven is still mine, my wife."

Miss Monk's face grew very pale, even to lividness. Was the prize to slip through her hands at the very moment she had thought to clasp it? Chetwynd saw her agitation, and mistook its origin.

"Sylvia," he resumed, more softly, his blue eyes full of stern fire, his brows knitted, his mouth set in a mournful gravity, "we were once betrothed. You put an end to our engagement, but I fancied then, because you had discovered that you did not love me, and I married Bernice. My mother desired you and me to marry each other. Bernice, dying, urged me to marry you. Did she fancy in that last hour that you loved me? The dying see clearly, it is said. Perhaps she had heard of our former engagement, although that is scarcely probable. My mother loved you; Bernice loved you. I cannot permit you to go forth to a life of toil and hardship. Sylvia, sister, knowing what I am and that I have no heart to offer, will you become my wife?"

The colour flamed again in Miss Monk's face.

"Oh, Roy!" she breathed again, in rapture. "I love you. To be your wife is more than I had hoped. But I will devote my life to you. We will work together, and I know that I can bring back to you a portion at least of your lost happiness."

Chetwynd smiled sorrowfully.

"Such a marriage is a one-sided affair," he said. "I have so little to give in return for your love. But I can spare you the toil and hardships of a governess's life; I can shield you from contact with the busy world; and I will try to make you happy."

Miss Monk arose swiftly and rushed toward him with her soft, undulating movements, and flung herself upon his breast.

He started back with a gesture of repulsion, but, recollecting himself, folded one arm around her. They were betrothed again, and he could give her at least a brother's caresses.

"Oh, Roy, this hour pays me for all I have endured!" cried Miss Monk. "All I ask is to be allowed to make you happy. I cannot hope ever to take the place of dear Bernice, but in time I may come to fill a little niche of my own in your heart. I have suffered so much. My life has been one long death without you. Take me closer, Roy, and give me the kiss of betrothal. At last—at last, I am yours."

Chetwynd put both arms around her and said, in a broken voice:



"Heaven bless you, my promised wife, my dear Sylvia! And may your future happiness atone for the sorrows of your past!"

A sigh, a breath, a faint rustle, like the brushing of a wing or the movement of a woman's dress, came fluttering through the room.

Chetwynd, still holding Sylvia to his breast, involuntarily looked up.

His appalled eyes beheld a sight that held him dumb and motionless.

He saw standing in the wide archway of the open sliding doors that which he believed to be the apparition of his lost Bernice!

She stood against a faintly lit background of dusky blooms, perfectly revealed, yet in the midst of an odorous twilight that made her seem indeed a vision from another world.

Sylvia's head had been buried in Chetwynd's breast. She wondered at his silence, and, looking up, discovered its cause.

She stared at the vision as if it had been some demon sent to call her to her eternal home. Her hair seemed to rise on end. Her tongue was glued to her mouth.

The seeming apparition opened wide her arms as if to embrace Chetwynd, and so, with outstretched arms, and yearning, anguished face, she slowly retreated backward like the airy vision she seemed, until she had vanished into the gloom beyond.

#### CHAPTER XXIV.

Not until the seeming spectre had disappeared did Lord Chetwynd arouse from his frozen silence. But then, as if galvanised, he flung Sylvia Monk from him in an utter forgetfulness of her, bounded across the room, and into the conservatory. The glazed doors at the lower end of the conservatory and opening into the garden were open. He made for them, uttering strange and incoherent cries.

Gilbert Monk was standing near the door, as if brought to a sudden halt. He had seen Bernice enter the conservatory, but had been unable to arrest her movements. He had seen her but now depart like a shadow, and he was in the act of pursuit when Lord Chetwynd's swift approach made him halt. The scholar knew that a crisis had occurred in the fortunes of himself and Sylvia, and upon his present coolness his own future and hers depended. He was equal to the occasion.

"Why, what's the matter, Chetwynd?" he asked, in the utmost apparent surprise. "Good gracious! is the man mad? Where are you going? Why are you running? Great Heaven! you look as if you had seen a ghost!"

Chetwynd turned upon Monk, eager and impetuous.

"Did you see her?" he cried. "Has any one passed out this way?"

"No one. I have been standing in the doorway here these fifteen minutes," replied Monk, with seeming truthfulness. "Whom do you seek? Sylvia?"

"It was Bernice!" said the marquis, all excitement. "I saw her as plainly as I see you, Gilbert—my dead wife, Bernice! Help me to search the conservatory."

Monk put on a look of alarm.

"My dear Chetwynd," he exclaimed, "you are the victim of some singular hallucination. Your brain is turned. Have you forgotten that Bernice is dead? How then have you seen her? Do the dead return from their graves? My dear boy, let me send for Doctor Hartgrave. You have got a brain fever."

Chetwynd shook off Monk impatiently, and searched the conservatory in every nook and corner, but he found no trace of his strange visitant. He dashed out into the garden, and Monk went with him, but they did not see again the slender, girlish, white-robed figure of the seeming spectre. At length they re-entered the conservatory, the marquis pale and distracted.

"It can't be possible that you thought you saw your dead wife, Chetwynd," said Monk, loudly, as they went up the aisle. "How could she come out of her grave? Ah, you think it was her ghost? Do you believe in ghosts?"

"I never did believe in them," said the marquis, brokenly. "I thought such belief a superstition of the ignorant. But her living body cannot return to me. I must therefore have seen her disembodied spirit."

"Nonsense, Chetwynd. You are upset by your return. To-morrow you'll smile at your odd illusions. Bernice is in Heaven. Why should she wander about here? Just use your reason, my dear fellow. Is she dead? We all know that she is. Do the dead return in mortal shape? It's fair to suppose they do not. What then? Why, you are the victim of an optical illusion brought on by over-excitement. I should fancy that you might have been the sport of some designing woman who had dressed herself for a part, but that I stood in the very door of the conservatory like a guard, and

no one could have possibly come in or gone out without my knowledge."

"It is no optical illusion, Gilbert. Sylvia saw it. Let us question her."

The marquis and Gilbert Monk entered the drawing-room. Miss Monk stood before the fire, her cheeks again glowing, but there was a look of awful dread and horror in her eyes.

She swept toward him, caught his arm, and cried out:

"Oh, Roy, why did you throw me from you? Why did you dart away so abruptly? You frightened me! How my heart beats still! What was the matter?"

"Did you not see Bernice?" he asked. "Were you not also looking at yonder archway?"

"I was looking at the archway," replied the consummate actress, "but no one was near it, Roy. What do you mean by your allusion to Bernice? It cannot be that you fancied you saw her?"

"I thought I saw her yonder, Sylvia. It is strange. I could have sworn that I beheld my lost wife. And you did not see her? Can it have been an illusion? Gilbert was standing near the doorway of the conservatory, and he says that no one came in or went out by that way."

"It was certainly an optical illusion," said Sylvia, in her sibilant voice. "Had any one stood in the doorway I must have seen her. No, no, dear Roy. You have been over-excited to-night, and your imagination has conjured up a mere optical illusion. That is all. With two good witnesses in Gilbert and me that no one was there you ought to resign your singular conviction."

Chetwynd was staggered in his belief. He put his hand to his forehead, saying, hollowly:

"Can I have been mistaken? Was it all a freak of my over-excited brain? It is easier to believe that than to believe that the dead can return."

He leaned against the low mantelpiece, and Sylvia laid her red cheek on his arm in a decreasing fondness.

"Gilbert," she said, proudly, "my place is here, at Roy's side, henceforth. May I tell him, Roy? Yes? Listen then, Gilbert. Our old betrothal—Roy's and mine—is renewed. We are to be married—Roy and I!"

"I congratulate you, Chetwynd, upon having won a true and loving heart," said Monk, extending his hand to the marquis. "This renewal of old relations will assuredly prove for the best. I suppose Sylvia won't mind my telling you now that she has loved you all along with the rare devotion. I hope you two will be happy."

"I am not myself yet," said Lord Chetwynd, with a troubled smile. "I seem suddenly to make the discovery that I have nerves. I'll go to my room, if you'll kindly excuse me, Sylvia. I am greatly fatigued after my journey. Good-night, Sylvia. Good-night, Gilbert."

Lord Chetwynd went up to his rooms and Gilbert Monk sauntered away into the conservatory, thence hurrying out into the grounds.

Miss Monk looked after him with a puzzled frown and went up to her own apartments.

She found old Rages in the dressing-room just unlocking the doors of the precious East Indian cabinet. The old ayah started at Miss Monk's entrance, and hastened to lock the doors opening into the hall. She then returned to the cabinet, and opened the secret compartment and took out the tiny gold box of rare East Indian poisons.

"What are you going to do?" asked Miss Monk, sinking luxuriously into an easy-chair.

"I want to see that my globules have not been tampered with," responded old Rages. "I feel uneasy, missy, about that ghost. It can't be possible that I made a mistake in the vial, but I intend to see. If I had made a mistake, the girl would have died in her coffin all the same—no, she would have recovered her consciousness at the end of three days. It's all right, missy, but I'll just make sure."

Miss Monk watched her attendant with languid interest, while the ayah opened the two vials we have before described.

"There were one hundred globules in each," muttered the old woman. "I took one out of vial number two, leaving ninety-nine. I will count them."

She proceeded to do so with laborious exactness.

"It's right," she announced. "There are just ninety-nine remaining. I can't tell what made me so foolish, but just as soon as you spoke of the ghost I took a desire to look at these vials."

"Now at the vial number three," said Miss Monk. "Still, that's all nonsense. It's all right, only there's one thing sure, Rages—Gilbert knows something about that ghost, or whatever it was. He swears he saw nothing. I wish I knew what game of his own he is playing. There's one thing sure—he knows the secret of that mysterious intruder of to-night."

The old ayah's weird eyes gleamed with a sudden light.

She hurriedly seized upon the third vial, opened it, and began hastily to count its contents. A look of dismay came over her face when she had finished. She repeated the counting again and again.

"Can't you make it count right?" asked Miss Monk, with sudden interest.

"There's only ninety-eight globules here," answered the old woman, blankly.

"And there were a hundred?"

"Exactly that—a hundred in each vial."

"You may have dropped a couple," and Miss Monk began to search.

"Stay, missy," said the old ayah, in a tone of deep significance; "answer me a question. Was Gilbert at home on the day that Lady Chetwynd was taken ill?"

"Yes. Don't you remember that he was in my boudoir before dinner? And that he went up to town after dinner without returning to the drawing-room? He came down to borrow money—I remember distinctly. We had guests to dine with us."

"Was he in your boudoir before we opened this cabinet, and had our conversation about Lady Chetwynd?"

"Yes; he went out, and I called you, and we came in here."

"Ah! And he was back in three days' time?"

"Yes. I telegraphed him that Lady Chetwynd was dead. You know all this. Why do you ask so many unimportant questions?"

"Simply to confirm my own suspicions and remembrances," said the old woman, her black face growing yellow. "May, Gilbert Monk is as keen as a tiger that scents blood. He suspected us. When he went out from your room that day he must have slipped in here. The doors were locked, it is true. How did he get in? With a bit of wire, perhaps. He is keen, is Gilbert Monk. He hid in here; he heard all we said. I remember I went to my own room for another vial. Only one link is wanting to make the chain of my suspicions complete, and deepen them into dead certainty. If you had been absent from this room a moment—"

Miss Monk uttered a singular cry.

"I was absent," she ejaculated. "Lady Chetwynd came to the door of my boudoir for a piece of music."

"Then all is clear. Gilbert changed the globules; and took an extra one out of this vial number three. He was back in three days. He gave her ladyship more of the drug. She was buried. He rescued her. He has hidden her somewhere all these months. Lady Chetwynd lives. It was no ghost, but Lady Chetwynd herself, whom you saw to-night!"

(To be continued.)

**SELLING ADULTERATED ARTICLES.**—Any person now selling adulterated articles is liable to a penalty of 50*l.* for the first offence, and six months' imprisonment with hard labour for the second. Very awkward to the negligent, very right to the designing. If it be carried out, the Registrar-General will show a healthier life condition in England.

**PORTABLE INK.**—At a recent meeting of the Frankfort Polytechnic Association Professor Baetiger exhibited a novel kind of ink, which is adapted to take on journeys and exploring expeditions. White blotting paper is saturated with aniline black, and several sheets are pasted to form a thin pad. When wanted for use a small piece is torn off and covered with a little water. The black liquid which dissolves out is a good writing-ink. A square inch of the paper will give enough ink to last for a considerable writing, and a few pads would be all that an exploring party need carry with them. As water is always available, the ink is readily made.

**FAT AND LEAN.**—Meat eaters and vegetarians show in their persons the effects of the diet. The first has the most brain force and nervous energy. A mixed food of animal and vegetable rations develops the highest intellectual powers. A strictly vegetable living ordinarily gives a fair complexion, and amiability and extreme pugnacity when the vegetarian's views in regard to that engrossing thought of his life are discussed. They are annual-meeting reformers, without ever setting a river on fire. Arabs are a sober, frugal race, rather slender, not tall, conscientious and contentious on religious subjects. They largely subsist on rice, pulse, milk and kaimac, something similar to whipped cream, through a vast region of an arid country where they are indigenous. They are not destitute of mutton, goats, camels and game; but they manifest no disposition to feed upon meats, as is necessary in temperate zones or in high northern latitudes. An intellectual man, one of their kindred, who rises to distinction by the grandeur of his mental status, is extremely rare. The beer and ale drinkers expand and grow fat, but they are not much given to profound researches in science.



[IMPROVING THE ACQUAINTANCE.]

## KATE'S ENGAGEMENT.

THEY could hardly have told how they became acquainted save that the restoration of a dropped glove was followed by a slight recognition at their next meeting. Kate Carlton remembered the delicacy of his manner on the occasion referred to, so she honoured him with a slight nod when he passed her in the street a few days after. Then, feeling a singular interest in him, she made guarded inquiries as to his name and position, but no one seemed to care anything about him, was believed to be "Mr. Perley," and, as to position, why, he hadn't any—that was plain enough. He was modest and retiring, however, Kate thought, and that was more than could be said of most of the male butterflies that surrounded her.

And now, as she sat on the beach, gazing dreamily at the rolling waters, silver-tinged with moonlight, and thought that to-morrow she should leave this beautiful resort, a sadness that she was unwilling to acknowledge filled her heart.

The low requiem of the waves touched a responsive chord in her nature, and she sighed involuntarily.

"Miss Carlton."

Somewhat startled, she turned quickly, only to meet the tenderly respectful glance of the unknown Mr. Perley.

"Do I intrude? I saw you from a distance, and I could not resist the inclination to come and speak to you," he continued, anxiously, as if disturbed by his own temerity.

"You are quite welcome," she answered, glancing off towards the sea.

He advanced and sat down beside her, his dark eyes seeking her face with a certain veneration. She felt his presence only too keenly, and the constraint it caused was unpleasant, and yet she would have regretted his departure at that moment.

"You are not happy to-night," he said, in a voice of mellow sympathy.

She tossed her head imperiously.

"Indeed! I am grateful for the information, sir."

"Still, it is true," he persisted, composedly.

She looked at him in mingled wonder and anger. How dare he speak so to her? and yet the tone was full of respect—she could not call him impertinent.

Thinking to disconcert him, she said, abruptly:

"Well, suppose it is true. What of it, Mr. Perley?"

"Nothing, only that it grieves me to see you so."

"You? That is rather singular."

She laughed in ridicule; it was the easiest way to disguise the gratification she felt.

There was a moment's silence. Kate pretended to watch the waves, and unconsciously grew very serious. Mr. Perley seemed lost in thought.

Suddenly he said:

"Miss Carlton, our acquaintance has been a singular one."

"Yes," she said, carelessly.

"We know very little of each other."

"Yes," she said again, with an indifferent shake of her head.

"And yet I will venture to say that we respect each other very much."

"You assume a great deal," she answered, coldly.

"I must," he resumed, with a winning frankness.

"I have no other resource. I have no one to tell you who I am, and if I tell you myself you will think me an egotist. I have experienced much happiness in the brief intervals that I have been allowed your society. In you I behold a true woman, not a frivolous—"

"Spare your compliments, sir, and bestow them where they will be appreciated," she interposed, haughtily.

A look of pain swept over his features, and he directed his eyes upon her with mild reproach. She could neither bear the glance nor return it, so she affected scorn, and rose up to go away.

"Are you offended, Miss Carlton?" he queried, gravely, as he stood by her side.

"I have cause enough to be," she rejoined.

"Pardon me, but that is not an answer to my question. I would not be rude, but Heaven knows I cannot help being earnest!"

His expressive eyes were fastened reverently upon her features, his tender, handsome face spoke volumes. She struggled with the undefinable feelings that filled her heart, and then, provoked with herself, and ashamed of her passivity, she flung out one hand, and exclaimed:

"No—yes! Oh, I hate you!"

"And I love you," he murmured, clasping the white fingers.

"Unhand me, sir! You are insolent!" she cried, her face crimson with outraged pride and mortification.

He bowed submissively, and walked away. She fled up the beach like a hunted fawn, but paused once to look back, and her blue eyes were full of tears. Her lover was just visible, and moving away with long strides. Just then her father joined her, and chided her for remaining out alone so long, but her only reply was a passionate burst of weeping.

There was a gay party assembled at the country house of Sir Richard Carlton, in good old Derbyshire. The season was one of amusements, the place afforded every facility, and the young people were in just the spirits to take the fullest advantage of the fact. But there was an exception, as there is to every rule. Kate evinced but little interest in the plans for frolic, and always escaped, when she could without appearing rude. Her father wondered; her lover, the Hon. James Barstow, sulked and fretted over it, and the servants declared that their young mistress had lost the cheerful spirit that had once animated her.

"Come, my darling, brighten up," said Sir Richard, placing his arm around her neck and gazing affectionately into her face. "You have been very moody of late, and our friends are beginning to notice it. It will never do. We are off to Lord Abbesley's this afternoon, for a few days' shooting, and you must go."

"If I must, it is settled," she replied, wearily.

"And treat Barstow a little more cordially, won't you?" he added, coaxingly.

"I'll try," sighed the girl, as she passed from the room.

Sir Richard stroked his whiskers, pushed his hands through his hair, and shook his head, in mingled vexation and perplexity.

Kate was acting very strangely.

At five o'clock they reached the grand old Abbesley Castle—a solid pile of stone, with towers and turrets—one of the few yet remaining to mark the struggles of feudal days.

There was little done that evening, for the party, especially the ladies, were weary, and they retired to their rooms at an early hour.

The next day the gentlemen were off on a hunting excursion, and the ladies were again alone.

Having exhausted other means of amusement, Kate, in company with a gray-haired retainer, visited the picture galleries and examined the rare old portraits.

"Is this all?" she asked him as she left the last gallery.

"There is one more room, my lady," said the old man, a peculiar expression of regret and fear clouding his face. "But my lord does not allow it to be opened; 'tis years since I looked in there myself."

"Ah! there is some secret connected with it," exclaimed Kate, with more animation than she had evinced for a long time. "Tell me the story, good Edgar. I'll never liep a word."

"Oh, it's not so very private, my lady," rejoined the aged servant, "but it's sad enough. You see my lord is high strung, as all his race were before him, and it's natural enough that those who come after him should be the same. Well, his son and he quarrelled just after the boy came home from Oxford, and his face has never been seen in these old rooms since. 'Twas a sad day for us all, my lady; young master was loved by us all, and by the whole country around too. Indeed it was his very goodness of heart that made all the trouble. You see he'd carry things with his own hands to the poor round about, and it so happened that in one family there was a buxom lass, and my lord grew suspicious, and accused Rupert of wrong doing. Alackaday! it was like throwing fire into gunpowder, and an awful scene came out of it. Rupert felt deeply injured, as he was in truth, my lady, and as my lord would not retract the young master left."

"And it is his portrait that is locked up in this next room?"

"Yes, my lady, but I dare not open the door."



"I have not asked you to do so, have I?"  
 "Pardon, my lady, no."  
 They passed downstairs and no more was said, but Kate was careful to see where the old retainer put the keys. And then when he was well out of the way she took them and hurried to the room. Her woman's curiosity was aroused, and she was determined to gratify it. She experienced but little difficulty in finding the proper key; and entering the gallery she looked the door behind her. Everything was covered with dust, and the very air seemed musty, but the pictures were distinguishable, and she soon beheld the unfortunate heir. Pausing opposite the portrait, she folded her arms and gazed upon it intently. Where had she seen that face before? The question recurred to her again and again, and at last she turned away with singular emotions agitating her breast. Visions seemed to dawn upon her just to tantalize her. Very little of her life had been practical, and she yearned for a change. Would she ever have it? Would this phantom ever leave her?

She hurried from the room, but paused on the threshold to give the picture one parting glance. It was a kindly face, and the eyes— But reflection was worse than useless.

Hurriedly locking the door, she went downstairs and restored the keys to their proper place.

An hour later the gentlemen came home, and the evening was passed in music and conversation.

The next morning Kate was walking in one of the parks.

The Hon. James Barstow had started with her, but her reserve chilled him, and he left her in anger. If the truth must be told she was glad of it.

Suddenly she became conscious of the presence of another, and looking up she beheld, to her consternation and amazement, Mr. Porley!

"You remember me," he said, with that brilliant smile of his.

"Yes, but— Oh, I never dreamed of seeing you here."

And then blushed crimson at the sound of her own voice.

He drew near and took her hand, saying, tenderly:

"Kate, my darling, it is useless to resist fate. We love each other. We cannot live apart."

"Oh, forbear. I am betrothed to another. Oh, this miserable life."

She hardly knew what she was saying. The flood of joy that swept over her heart at seeing him seemed to have clouded her pride and reason. He drew her unresistingly to his breast and kissed her.

"You will not sacrifice yourself, Kate; you will not destroy your life and mine—you cannot."

"Pray let me go. It is unkind to detain me. You must realize the grief of my position," she sobbed, resting her head upon his shoulder.

"I know it all, my love. But you can trust me, you can rest your life in my hands, can you not?"

"Yes," she breathed, faint as a zephyr.

"Then come."

He placed his arm around her waist and led her from the wood. In the road was a carriage, and Kate allowed herself to be placed within it and to be carried away she knew not whither. Was she mad thus to trust a stranger? She could not think, she only knew that her love for this man exceeded every other passion of her being.

"My child," said Sir Richard, "it is time you were settled in life. The Hon. James Barstow has waited patiently for you, and now you must give him your hand. He is noble, wealthy and moral."

"Also petulant, stupid and selfish."

"Virtue is better than brains, my dear. Besides, Barstow does not need talent; he has money enough. Geniuses are unendurable in private. Now set the day, and let us have this matter disposed of."

"I cannot marry him, father," said Kate, quietly.

"Cannot? Indeed, my daughter! and why not, if you please?"

"Because I have one husband already."

"What? Zounds, girl! Furies!"

But his breath gave out in the greatness of his amazement, and he stared at her like a lunatic, his eyes and mouth wide open, his face blanched. If the walls had fallen in—if the floor had blown up under his feet, he could not have been more astonished.

"It is true, father; you must make the best of it."

"True? married? When, when, I say? Why don't you speak? Who to? who is the knave? Is it for this I brought you up? No, no; you're mad—stark, staring mad."

And he gazed at her compassionately.

"I was married the second day of our stay at Lord Abbasley's to one I loved. Whatever the consequences are I shall never regret it. When you are willing to see my husband I will send for him."

Sir Richard grated his teeth, and strode the floor,

and wrung his hands. His rage was so great that he could find no words to give it vent. And while he paced the room the door opened, and Lord Abbasley rushed in, his veins standing out upon his forehead, his rufous face blue with passion.

"What do you think, Carlton?" he roared, bringing his cane down upon the floor. "That escape-grace of a son of mine has come home after staying away eight years, and—hang him! the scoundrel!—he has married a milk-maid right under my castle walls!"

"Impossible!"

"Egad, sir, I wish it was; but, no; everything is possible with this generation. The youth are going to perdition, sir, and nothing will stop them! Oh! I'd like to thrash that rascal. Just look at the audacity of the thing! She a milk-maid—a clumsy, web-footed boor—and he an Abbasley! I shall go mad."

And he began walking to and fro, striking the floor with his cane as he went.

"It's poor consolation, my lord, but I'm in the same fix," said Sir Richard, with a groan.

"You? How?"

"Why, my daughter—I say it with shame—has rashly married one of her choice, a poor tailor for all I know. I'm miserable. I wish I were dead. I'm disgraced and ruined."

Lord Abbasley sat down and wiped his brow. Sir Richard dropped into a chair and groaned, while Kate sat still and silent as a nun. Presently a knock sounded upon the door.

"Come in," growled the discomfited fathers, in chorus.

A young and elegantly dressed gentleman entered.

"You scoundrel," shouted Lord Abbasley, arising and flourishing his cane, "I'll teach you to marry a milk-maid right under my nose, you idiot!"

"Hold, father. Yonder sits my wife."

"What? Is this true, you rascal?"

"It is true," said Kate, taking Rupert's hand.

"You're an idiot, Sir Richard, and I'm another," exclaimed Lord Abbasley, bursting into a loud laugh, and embracing his son at the same time, while Sir Richard half smiled, half wept with relief. Shortly afterwards the marriage was publicly celebrated with great éclat. W. G.

## SCIENCE.

**NEW SIEGE GUN.**—A new 25-pounder, weighing a ton, is to be introduced into the service. It is chiefly designed to be a siege gun in India and other places where the heavy siege gun cannot travel.

**HER MAJESTY'S SHIP "THUNDERER."**—A trial trip of the turret ship "Thunderer" has been made, the vessel being commanded by Captain Courtney. She left her moorings at Pembroke Dockyard at three o'clock in the afternoon, and steamed some miles to sea, returning about seven o'clock. The results were, in every respect, most satisfactory. The draught of water forward is 20ft. 2in.; aft, 24ft. 4in.; speed, 11½ knots; pressure of steam, 25lb.; revolutions, 61.

### MEDICAL USES OF CARBOLIC ACID.

1. It is not proved that carbol is a general disinfectant.
2. It is of the greatest use to disinfect wounds.
3. It accomplishes this by destroying pus, etc., and by preventing inflammation.
4. Its use in wounds moderates pain.
5. Its use on the skin relieves itching, and produces an anesthesia sufficient for minor cutting operations.
6. It seems to be of use internally, in certain cases, in scaly skin diseases, and at least as a moderator of pain in cancer.
7. It has not proved of decided use in other diseases.

**A NEW FRENCH ARMOUR SHIP.**—A description of the new armour ship just completed for the French Government at Lorient gives the idea that this is an extremely formidable vessel. It is called "L'Espadon" (the Sword Fish); it has two powerful engines which give it a great speed; it steers so well that it turns within the distance of its own length; it has a spherical deck scarcely above water, and armed with numerous tubes by which the deck can be swept from stem to stern with scalding steam; it has a ram of steel 7½ feet long and 12 inches thick; and it has one gun with a range of 8,000 yards, mounted on a low tower in the centre of the ship. The French say that with this ship they can sink anything now afloat—but that assertion remains to be proved. And if they prove it, it will only show that they are greater than supposed in the art of sinking.

**THE COMING COMET.**—An astronomical friend well up in stellar matters tells us all about the coming comet. It is an old wanderer known as Bela's

which was thought, like Niobe, to have changed into a shower of meteoric stones. Comets do, it appears, reach an earth stage or opaque character, on the principle that a body when frequently electrified becomes magnetic. Our earth was once a comet; but its tail is now exhibited only in earth currents of electricity, which are indicated by the Aurora Borealis and by stoppages of the telegraph. All astronomers and geologists admit that the earth was once on fire, but have not remarked that this means it was then a comet. Our friend informs us that a comet may fall into the sun, as Newton thought, because it is attracted on its side next the sun more than it is repelled on the other side, as the electricity escapes from its tail. But, as the earth retains any electricity expelled from the sun or moon she can never fall into the central orb, the two synchronous tides exemplifying the attraction of one side of the earth by the moon and the repulsion of the other side. The *modus operandi* is the same as occurs when a body is presented to an electrifying machine. It becomes negative, and rushes to the machine to regain its due share of the electric fluid. But the earth, being perfectly insulated, is as much repelled throughout half its extent (as the tides show) as it is attracted through the other half.

**PASTEUR'S SUBMARINE LAMP.**—M. J. D. Pasteur, of Gonnep, has invented a very simple and ingenious lamp for the use of divers. The great expense and trouble connected with the use of the electric light for diving apparatus led M. Pasteur to form the idea of a much cheaper and more practical lamp to burn under water. Now the atmospheric air under pressure in the helmet of the diver, by means of the air-pump, is but partially deteriorated, and M. Pasteur tried to examine whether the remaining oxygen was still sufficient to maintain the light of an ordinary petroleum lamp. The trial which he made for that purpose succeeded perfectly. On the opening in the helmet, where, by means of the valve, the consumed air escapes into the water, is screwed an indiarubber tube ¼ in. diameter and 4ft. long, to which the water-tight lamp was attached. The side on which the air enters the lamp was, as in the helmet, divided in such a way as to prevent the light from being blown out, and to distribute the air as much as possible under and around the flame. The little valve spindle, placed upon the helmet to prevent the entrance of the water, was taken away and put on the top of the lamp. Behind the light was placed a parabolic mirror, and on the front side a convex glass; to the back was fitted a crook to carry the lamp, whether in the hand or on the breast. M. Pasteur had the satisfaction to read with this lamp under water smallhand writing, and observed at the same time that neither the carbonic acid nor the vapour of water breathed out by the diver had any influence on the illuminating powers of the flame.

## THE MYSTERY OF FALKLAND TOWERS.

### CHAPTER XX.

The tavern, park, assembly, mask and play!  
 Those dear destroyers of the tedious day;  
 That wheel of tops! that saunter of the town!  
 Call it diversion, and the pill goes down!

Young's *Love of Fame*.

**FALKLAND HOUSE**—for nearly a century the town residence of the ancient Falkland family—was an old and dingy but imposing and aristocratic structure in Regent's Square.

But it had been thoroughly repaired and renovated and wore a more cheerful aspect than it had assumed for many years, when the Falklands, with more than half their castle establishment, came up to London to occupy it, which they did in about a week after the events narrated in the last chapter.

Lady Florence had, strange to say, never been to London but once before, and then with her godfather's family when quite young.

Her father's infirmities and eccentric habits had inspired her later years with so much anxiety and solicitude that she had been content to remain buried in the country, with no other visitors than the few gentlemen of her acquaintance, and no friends but her books, her music, and her sketching portfolio.

But now she entered upon London life with a new zest and new feelings. She also had, almost unconsciously to herself, come to act a part.

She trained herself to duplicity so far as her nature would permit her. She confined her fears and suspicions to her own breast, and endeavoured to appear trustful and at ease.

She felt herself to be envied by deceitful men and women, whose object, perchance, was her own destruction; and, while she dared not hope, while she knew not which way to look for succour, she

thought—poor innocent—to fight them with their own weapons.

She came to London, also, with a sort of feeling akin to the drunkard's thirst—a hope to drown her miseries by drinking deeply of the whirling excitement of winter life in town.

Poor, unhappy Florence!

In this very mood—brave and spirited as it might be—was she the surer, easier prey of those who would compass her destruction.

If she had been easily deceived and cajoled in the country, in London—("Crucible into which destiny casts a life, when she wants a scoundrel or a demi-god!")—she was but as potter's clay in their hands.

She tried to communicate with the powerful family of the Earl of Glenmorgan, but her letters were unanswered, and she was made to understand that they were spending the winter abroad.

She wrote to other families of rank, whose acquaintance she had formed while under her godfather's protection, and by whom her family were well known and highly respected, but she received no answer from them.

Ralph Romney called again and again at Falkland House, unbeknown to her, and was turned away with icy messages purporting to come from her.

He at length grew desperate, believed that in the gaiety of her new life she had ceased to care for him, and, under the guidance of Falkland, Captain Diggs and others whose vicious acquaintance he had formed at the castle, plunged into a whirlpool of dissipation, while Lady Florence, thinking that his evil propensity for gaming had proved far stronger than his regard for her, was in a like measure the more ready to indulge in the glittering excitements that were artfully spread for her allurements.

All this was precisely as had been intended by Falkland and Madame La Grande, and they praised themselves in secret at perceiving the swift development of their plots.

The rank of the former made him an object of cultivation to men of respectability and real rank, but besides his own creatures, he took care to introduce into Falkland House and to Lady Florence's acquaintance only those that were corrupt and vicious.

Balls (always of a questionable character), the opera, private parties in her own name, and a hundred other dissipations succeeded each other in rapid succession.

Her principal escort on these occasions, if a male, was sure to be some vile *roué* of rank like Sir Plantagenet de Vavassour, or some miserable impostor, such as Fitz-Grammont, Redesdale, or Hugo Withers, who steadily persisted in endeavouring to vitiate her mind, by persuading her to affect a certain boldness and abandon of manner as the most suitable to a fine lady of the period.

Of course, at the opera and other places, where her ancient name preceded her, she was seen and known by those who should have formed the circle of her acquaintance, but artful falsehoods representing her as the incarnation of folly, effrontery, and perverseness were scattered, ready-made; and, as these were apparently only too strongly confirmed by the presence of the questionable characters that were constantly kept about her, she was shunned, and, all unknowingly, soon became a common target for the shafts of ridicule, detraction and slander.

She could not fail to notice this avoidance on the part of those who, by rank and station, should be her friends, but her pride was great, and the serpent tongues of those around her—the tongues of Madame La Grande, Lady Fitz-Grammont, the Countess of Arundel, and, last, but scarcely less vicious than the rest, Felicia Withers—had but little difficulty in persuading her that it arose from "uprightness," jealousy and envy upon their part, but this induced her to conduct herself with even more freedom and carelessness of the opinions of worthy people.

She had but one friend, and him she considered her greatest enemy—Captain Diggs. Despite his being chiefly concerned with young Romney, he was near her often than she thought. He sighed when he viewed the apparent success of the schemers against her, but was still stout of heart and hopeful.

And so the fly appeared hopelessly entangled in the golden web at last.

"Everything goes on swimmingly with both Romney and my little cousin," said Lord Falkland one day to Madame La Grande. "The former, Diggs informed me, lost nearly two thousand pounds at *carté* last evening. And as for our little chitling, Florence, I wonder if the iron is hot enough to venture a strike. Read that, and then, by the merest accident, you know, have Florence to read it also."

He handed her a copy of a fashionable journal with a certain paragraph on the first page underlined.

She read it, and smiled her approval.

"But I scarcely think it is yet safe for you to make a formal proposal," said she.

"We have a little party here to-night, you know," said he. "I suspect that something will happen then which, added to that paragraph, may alter your mind as to my chances of success, even upon a formal proposal."

"What do you mean?"

He laughed, and quitted the room without making a reply.

It was about noon when Lady Florence, in a charming morning dress, entered the same room. A copy of the same journal had fallen upon the carpet, and she picked it up, and seated herself at the window to have a glance at its gossip.

Just then in came Madame La Grande, quite red in the face, and looking about her this way and that, with a troubled, hurried air. At last she saw the journal in Lady Florence's hand, and made a rush for it at once, exclaiming:

"It is mine! it is mine! There is nothing to read in it! Give it to me at once, my lady!"

"Wait."

"No, no! I don't wish to be rude, but you mustn't read the paper, indeed you must not!"

"But I shall read it!" exclaimed Lady Florence, whose eye had been attracted by her own name in print.

As she read she grew very white, and at last, as the paper dropped from her nerveless hands, she gave a low moan of distress and dismay.

The paragraph she had read ran as follows:

"THE DI VERNON OF THE SEASON.—It is whispered in certain circles, wherein the coming events of the lower as well as the upper fashionable world are pretty accurately shadowed forth, that the Di Vernon of the season, Lady Florence Fek\*\*\*d, is soon to be married. Who is to be the unfortunate gentleman it is not stated; it may be her own cousin, the present Baron of Falkland Towers, or some one or another of the gilded fops and disreputable swells—long since discarded by good society, if, indeed, they ever knew what it was—with whom she delights to appear in public, in her brazen and absurd efforts to imitate the vulgar abandon of Lady Gay Spanker, which efforts have already brought upon her the opprobrium of all those among whom, by right of rank and a noble name, she might ere this have moved a beauteous star."

As Lady Florence read this cruel paragraph the glamour of her own pride in which she had gradually and unconsciously clothed herself, and the tissue of falsehood, deception and misrepresentation which had been woven around her by others, appeared to fall and fade from her, permitting her purblind vision to see the hollow, shallow, concealed thing she had become. She groaned aloud, and a deadly faintness, like that of a slow, remorseless hand, crept over her heart.

"Oh, who could have had the imprudence to leave that hateful paper in your way, my dear young lady?" cried Madame La Grande, fairly wringing her hands. "How white you are. Shall I ring the bell?"

"No," said Lady Florence, raising her head with an effort and speaking in icy tones. "It is unnecessary."

Just then the Countess of Arundel was announced. She bounced in with her usual *clan*, but paused, glanced from one lady to the other and then at the paper in Lady Florence's lap, and seemed to comprehend everything.

"It was an accident, my dear countess—I could not prevent her reading it," murmured Madame La Grande, in a sort of self-vindicating tone, as though conscious of having committed a great imprudence.

"Never mind, my dear," cried the pretty countess, flinging herself impulsively upon the sofa at Lady Florence's side. "Be sure that this cruel attack, cowardly as it is, cannot injure you, but must recoil upon the head of its instigator—some one of those upstarts, envious of your beauty and fame, I'll be bound. It is, perhaps, best that you should know it after all, and the only thing to be done is to brave it out."

"Oh, countess, do you think so?"

"Certainly, my dear young lady," cried Madame La Grande, hastening to clench the nail so opportunely driven home. "We must come out more strongly than ever. You have pride and will enough to beat down the crawling envy which so obviously inspired this paragraph."

"Yes; and I will beat it down," exclaimed weak, shallow, beset and purblind Lady Florence, rising in the loftiness of the false pride from which there was no one to rescue her. "I will, as you say, come out more strongly and freely than ever, until they writhe with jealousy and mortification."

She swept out of the room, and Madame La Grande sank into the seat she had deserted, both she and the countess convulsed with vicious glee.

During the same day his lordship was waited upon by one of his peculiar friends, the "Hon.

Percy Redesdale," who rather confidently demanded the loan of a hundred pounds.

"It is impossible at the present moment, my dear fellow."

"Aw! then when can you let me have it, my lord?" said the Hon. Percy, twirling his moustache, and regarding his lordship with an insolent air.

"Will let you know this evening, my boy, when you come to our party. Of course you'll be there? I've noticed that you have already made a decided impression on my fair cousin, eh, youascal? Be sure she will be out of sorts until the arrival of her favourite escort."

"Aw! you flatter me, you do, indeed; but I shall be there—I shall be there! But, my lord, as to the money, you know I must have it!"—this being said with another insolent look.

"Certainly, my lad. Everything shall be arranged satisfactorily this evening. Good-day!"

The Honourable Percy Redesdale lounged out of the house; but a black look followed him which he could not see—an ominous chuckle which he could not hear.

The party of that evening at Falkland House was a larger one than had at first been attended.

The great drawing-rooms were brilliantly lighted, the banquet was magnificent, the music fine, and the company—including a number of parties of genuine rank, for whom the noble name of Falkland still possessed an influence and a charm despite the detraction by which it had suffered—more than usually exclusive and refined.

Of course every one had read the paragraph in the newspaper although no one had the bad taste to allude to it. Lady Florence, proud, self-possessed, and more beautiful than ever, least of all seemed aware of its existence, and she quitted the apartments with an imperious air.

"Ah, my dear lady," exclaimed a well-known, airy voice, "it is some time since we met, but time has only added to your marvellous charms. May I have the honour of your hand for the first set?"

"You will have to excuse me, sir," she replied, very coolly, for the gentleman addressing her was Captain Diggs; "I am engaged for the entire evening."

They were a little apart from the general company, and the captain suddenly addressed her in low tones, speaking in his swift, sharp, incisive voice.

"You once promised to have faith in me, no matter how appearances would seem against me," he said. "Perhaps I cannot blame you that you have lost all faith in me; but you will yet learn that I am indeed your friend—perhaps the only true one you have."

His low voice was so earnest, beseeching, and passionate that she looked at him with mingled doubt and surprise; and then, Pride, her bad angel, was strong again within her.

"Well?" she asked, with mock-condescension.

"Do not, I beseech you, dance with Percy Redesdale this evening!"

She replied by a more look of contempt, and passed on; while the captain, restraining a sigh, resumed his former gaiety, and mingled with the company.

"Ah, countess!" he cried, "you, I hope, will honour me in the first set, will you not?"

"Certainly, my gallant warrior; and you shall be my escort of the evening."

Lady Florence had already engaged herself for a number of dances to Percy Redesdale, whom she liked better than any of his lordship's friends. She scarcely knew why it was so. Perhaps, although she cared nothing for him, she thought in her vanity, she saw more genuine good-heartedness in him than the rest.

The music struck up, and the first cotillon was in progress.

Lady Florence was entering into the dance with much spirit, and the Hon. Percy was exerting his colloquial powers in his most aristocratic drawl, when some confusion arose at one end of the room, as by some person, or persons, forcing an entrance.

Directly thereafter, and ere the music had ceased to breathe, a burly, roughly dressed, keen-eyed man pressed his way unceremoniously through the brilliant dancers, and laid his hand on the Hon. Percy's shoulder.

"I want you, my man!"

"Me?" stammered the gentleman. "Do you know, fellow, that you are addressing the Honourable Percy Redesdale?"

The burly, keen-eyed man laughed a strange, dry laugh.

"I don't profess to keep track of your aliases," said he, producing a pair of handcuffs, "but for the present I only know you as a felon escaped from Paris—a felon, duly convicted of forgery and attempted murder, and already sentenced to death for the same."

The mask fell from Redesdale's face, showing the



glare and glitter of the inborn gladiator behind it, and, with a fierce shout, he struck out for liberty and life.

Lady Florence stood as in a frightful dream. She afterward had a vague remembrance of the gay company being thrown into wild confusion—of a number of policemen rushing to their comrades' assistance—of her partner of a moment before, torn, dishevelled and bleeding, and fighting upon the floor like a wild cat, loading the air with his blasphemies—of his subjugation—of his attempt to fly at Lord Falkland's throat—of his being finally borne away, raving and yelling like a madman—and at last of some one leading her to a seat.

But she had but little and vague recollection of this; for she recovered her senses in bed, with her head on fire with a fierce fever that threatened to consume her life.

(To be continued.)

## FACETIE.

The latest feminine fashion of wearing the front hair is known as the *Skye-terrier* style.

**DYING FOR LOVE.**—"I am dying for love," said a melancholy young man as he put the coal-black fluid on his moustache.

### A PERFECT EXCUSE.

Rector (to his keeper): "Morning, Woodgate. Didn't I see you at church yesterday?"

Keeper (apologetically): "Yes, sir. But—I felt I was a doin' wrong all the time, sir!"—*Punch*.

**BETTER STILL.**—A Dutchman being advised to rub his limbs well with brandy for the rheumatism, said he had heard of the remedy, but added, "I doish petter as dat—I drinks de brandy and den rub mine legs mit de bottle."

### A SUPERFLUOUS QUESTION.

Fanny (who's angling for Herbert with no one knows how many thousands a year): "Herbert, I don't understand this boating slang; now do tell me, whatever do they mean by a good 'catch'?"—*Fun*.

**YOUNG ADDERS.**—A teacher who, in a fit of vexation, called her pupils a set of young adders, on being reproved for her language, apologized by saying that she was speaking to those just commencing their arithmetic.

**A STRIKING DIFFERENCE.**—"How do you and your wife get on?" "Oh, rather badly. She gave me her hand awhile ago, and I thanked her; she gives it to me now every time I speak, and I'd thank her not to."

### TOMMY TUG'S VIEW OF IT.

First Swell: "So you're out again as the jolly young waterman! Which side do you venture on this year, Oxford or Cambridge?"

Tide Swell: "The safe side, this year! My sweet griffin, I ventures my little lot on Ammersmith Bridge—how's you?"—*Fun*.

**COALS OF FIRE.**—"Go home and heap coals of fire on your husband's head," said a magistrate to a woman who was complaining of her husband's ill-conduct. "Well, yer honour, sein' you say so, I'll do it, though I'm sure it'll be of no use to heap coals on his head, 'cause three pails 'o bilin' hot water hain't done him no good."

**PARTIAL EASE.**—An elderly gentleman of Aberdeen, thinking he was about to die, endeavoured to get a promise from his young wife that she would never marry again. The lady hesitated a long time, but finally gave her husband's anxious heart partial ease by saying, "I will promise not to more than I can help."

**A CLINCHER.**—A man who was boasting of the unusual height of his relations was annoyed by one of the company who said he had a brother twelve feet tall. "Impossible!" snarled the boaster. "Well, two halves make a whole, don't they?" asked the other. "Yes," was the reply. "Well, then, I've two half-brothers, each of whom is six feet high," was the logical rejoinder.

### TOWN MOUSE AND COUNTRY MOUSE.

Unsophisticated Cousin: "What do you mean to be when you grow up, Jack?"

Jack: "Oh, I mean to be a soldier, and you shall be my nurse."

Unsophisticated Cousin: "Well, but soldiers don't have nurses, Jack!"

Jack: "Oh, don't they, just! That shows you've never been in the parks! Why, I don't think I ever saw a soldier without one!"—*Punch*.

### A CONSIDERATE HUSBAND.

Young Wife: "Joined the Junior Pantheon?" Oh, Alfred, you said when we were married you'd never care to belong to another club!"

Alfred: "Yes, my darling; but I thought it would be so nice for you, the next Thanksgiving Day, to have a good window and first-rate lunch!"—*Punch*.

**INDUCTIVE RECOGNITION.**—Two French ladies were looking for the little daughter of one of them in a group of baby carriages. "Do you see him?" asked the friend of the mother. "Him? I am looking for her nurse." "Her nurse?" "Yes, all

children look alike. I know the nurse, and I can find the child best in that way." "As for myself, I think all bonzes look alike." "How do you find yours, then?" "Oh, I know the soldier who is her beau."

**TO THE SCIENTIFIC WORLD.**—It seems that there is a state of oxygen gas which possesses "a flavour of lobsters," but, unfortunately, it has the drawback of being injurious, otherwise, in such dear times as ours, lovers of these crustacea might have been glad to inhale it as a substitute for their favourite shell-fish. Now that they are so costly, cannot some chemist discover a cheap and harmless gas which has a flavour of oysters?—*Punch*.

### "PICTURE-SUNDAY."

(It is very difficult to know exactly the right thing to say to an Artist about his Pictures. We recommend unlimited praise; but do not enter into details.)

"Oh, Mr. Robinson! your pictures are quite too—more than lovely! Surely you are the greatest artist that ever lived! Are you not? Candidly!"

"Well, I don't know. There was Michael Angelo, you know, and Hogarth, and—"

"Oh, your pictures have all the ineffable refinement and purity of Hogarth, all the irresistible humour of Michael Angelo, and—and—something quite your own, which I have never perceived in the works of either of those masters!"—*Punch*.

## THE SULTAN AND THE EX-VIZIER.

### SULTAN.

SINCE you turned Dervish, long ago,  
By true report your life I know,  
And high advance in wisdom's lore;  
And much, believe me, I deplore  
The day I lost—by curious Fate—  
My good Prime Minister of State!

### DERVISH.

Thanks! gracious sire! the life I live  
Has more of peace than power can give;  
Here, in my cloister, I have learned  
Contempt of rank; and all I earned  
Of power and pelf in your employ  
Would poorly stand my present joy!

### SULTAN.

No doubt!—and as for power and pelf,  
I'd like a quiet life myself;  
And yet your wisdom I would fain  
Employ to serve my realm again;  
The truly wise and truly great,  
And such alone, should rule the State!

### DERVISH.

'Tis true, your Majesty; and yet,  
I would not pay the hateful debt:  
You call me wise; well—be it so;  
But being wise, I must forego  
An office which (am I too bold?)  
A wise man would not choose to hold!

J. G. S.

## GEMS.

NONE so little enjoy life, and are such burdens to themselves, as those who have nothing to do. The active alone have the relish of life. He who knows not what it is to labour knows not what it is to enjoy. Recreation is only valuable as it unbinds the mind, as a bow never unstrung loses its propelling power. The idle know nothing of it. It is exertion that renders rest delightful and sleep sweet and undisturbed. The happiness of life depends on the regular prosecution of some laudable purpose or calling which engages, helps, and enlivens all our powers.

POLITENESS may prevent the want of wit and talent from being observed; but wit and talent cannot prevent the discovery of the want of politeness.

**VISIT OF PRINCE IMPERIAL TO PRINCE LEOPOLD.**—Prince Louis Napoleon paid a private visit recently to his Royal Highness Prince Leopold, who is pursuing his academical studies at Oxford. His Imperial Highness, who was attended by two of his suite, inspected several of the principal university buildings, and visited the Vice-Chancellor (Dean Liddell), at the Deanery, Christ Church. The Prince was met on his arrival at the Great Western Railway Station by Prince Leopold, who was accompanied by his tutor, Mr. Collins.

**THE FIVE ALLS.**—Inquiry has been made as to what the words the Five Alls alluded to. The reply is that the Five Alls was at one time a very common tavern sign in England. It consisted of five human figures, each accompanied by a motto. The first was a king, in full regalia, with the legend, "I govern all;" the second, a bishop in pontificals,

with the motto, "I pray for all;" the third, a lawyer in his gown, with the motto, "I plead for all;" the fourth, a soldier in regimentals, with the motto, "I fight for all;" and the fifth, a poor countryman with scythe and rake—the motto, "I pay for all."

## HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

**SUMMER DRINKING.**—Drinking a great deal of cold water in warm weather disturbs the whole system; it gives a filled-up feeling, it promotes large perspirations. This debilitates, and increases the liability to colds. The earlier in the day a person drinks the greater will be the thirst. A whole glass of cold water should never be taken without removing it from the lips. It has killed many a man. Grasp the whole glass in the palm of the hand, take one swallow at a time, remove the glass, then take another; in this way half a glass will satisfy quite as much as a whole one, and is perfectly safe, however warm the person may be.

## STATISTICS.

**PROGRESS SHOWN BY THE INCOME-TAX.**—The property and profits assessed to income-tax in the United Kingdom for the year ending the 5th of April, 1871, amounted to 419,750,798*l.*, being 21,622,000*l.* more than in the preceding year. There was an increase of 20,311,000*l.* in England, and of 1,359,000*l.* in Scotland, but a decrease of 48,000*l.* in Ireland. The profits of trades and professions, public companies, railways, ironworks, gasworks, &c., assessed under Schedule D for the year 1870, yield an increase of 10,644,000*l.* in comparison with those for the year 1869—9,383,000*l.* in England, 719,000*l.* in Scotland, 42,000*l.* in Ireland. In 1853 the gross annual value assessed was 47,559,474*l.* for lands, &c., and 46,959,338*l.* for houses; in 1870, 56,540,000*l.* on lands, &c., and 52,732,000*l.* on houses. The profits charged to income-tax in respect of "trades and professions" under Schedule D, in Great Britain, were 75,008,000*l.* in the year 1853, and 129,773,000*l.* in the year 1870-71. In order to make this comparison a portion of the present constituents of Schedule D—viz., railways, canals, mines, &c., has been excluded from the figures for 1870, because it did not form part of that schedule (but of Schedule A), in 1853. A comparison of the profits assessed under those heads for the same years gives remarkable results. The net receipts from income-tax in the year ending the 31st of March, 1872, amounted to 9,329,102*l.*—viz., 3,325,492*l.* under Schedule A, 434,903*l.* under Schedule B, 897,541*l.* under Schedule C, 4,125,324*l.* under Schedule D, and 544,842*l.* under Schedule E.

## MISCELLANEOUS.

**A TISSUE-PAPER masquerade** was given in New York, at which all wore dresses of that material.

The King of Siam has established two schools under English masters at Bangkok, for the sons of the nobles.

It is rumoured that Dr. Lushington's secret about Lord Byron has not died with him, and will be made public before long.

The Prince of Wales has signified his intention to lay the foundation-stone of the Norfolk County School, about to be erected at Elmham, in that county, on Easter Monday next.

**CHISLEHURST CHAPEL.**—The policeman who was employed night and day outside the chapel at Chislehurst, lest any outrage should be attempted from motives of mischief or plunder, has now been withdrawn, though a nightly watch is still kept inside the building.

**THE SEA SERPENT.**—The sea-serpent has turned up again—this time in the Bay of Biscay. Its head is described as like that of a hippocampus, and its length is reckoned at about twenty-five feet. A large devil fish was in close attendance when last seen. He was supposed to be one of the serpent's first cousins in the maternal line.

**THE MARRIAGE OF THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH.**—It is said in Paris that the marriage of the Duke of Edinburgh will not take place till next March, and that before it does take place the Queen will pay a visit to St. Petersburg. It is whispered that there is some difficulty as to whether the wedding should be solemnized in England or Russia.

**BLACK CYGNETS IN THE JARDIN DES PLANTES.**—Six little black Australian swans have just emerged from the shell in the Jardin des Plantes after sixty days' devotion of the mother, who hatched them in the open air. The *acte de naissance* of these little ones has been formally drawn up, as this is the first time so satisfactory a result has been obtained. A pair of these birds costs from 2,000 to 2,500 francs.

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## NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

**POLLY AND SARAH B.**—Handwriting clear and legible and would be considered good. A trifle too angular, possibly.

**S. G. G.**—It would be quite in accordance with ceremony to accept the present. A turquoise is a charming colour.

**F. JOHN B.**—We can offer no remuneration for the matter you propose. If, however, you care to send a specimen, we shall be happy to express our opinion in regard to its merits.

**A. M.**—The possessor of the paper in question might certainly sustain a valid claim. But we advise you to place the matter in the hands of a respectable solicitor.

**JACKER.**—You might address a letter thus: "The Publisher of *The International*, London," or in fine, if you prefer any other paper, you have only to order it through the usual channel. No difficulty exists. The price of the paper we have mentioned is one penny.

**T. T.**—There is only one course, but it is alike simple, satisfactory, and decisive. Apply by letter to the Superintendent of the Workhouse, stating the entire facts (as you have already done to ourselves) and the nature of your desire in the matter. No difficulty whatever exists.

**EDALINE.**—The lines occur in Moore's Irish Melodies. "She is far from the land where her young hero sleeps," is the initial line of the composition, and in it especial reference is intended to the case of the Hibernian patriot Emmet. The circumstance in question is wholly and indubitably matter of strict fact.

**DELICATE HEALTH.**—Most decidedly a hair mattress. Anything too luxuriously soft, though pleasant (and therefore celebrated by all the genial authors from Anakreon and Horace down to Shakespeare and Swinburne) can by no means conduce to health. The mattress you mention is in any case preferable.

**A POOR MOTHER.**—Try a short memorial with a few responsible signatures (clergymen, doctors, manufacturers, or merchants) to the Home Secretary. We shall be glad to hear from you again, and we will gladly advise you to the utmost extent. We certainly think you would gain your point. Express yourself simply and directly (that being the truest pathos) as you have done in the communication addressed to us.

**GEORGIUS.**—1. Leading publishers will never, as a rule, entertain the work of an author already unknown. It is very hard to make the beginning and you must be content to climb gradually. But that can ultimately be done, supposing your production to possess genuine merit, but it depends on the character of the work. 2. Ask for an estimate.

**ATTICUS.**—Yes; the story of Hero and Leander is strictly founded on fact. Nor is the distance by any means remarkable; in fact Lord Byron performed precisely the same thing. See *Byron's Life*, and Sir John Cam Hobhouse's annotation. Hero was a Pythian priestess, and by the unanimous consent of antiquity a beautiful, gifted, graceful, gushing member of the feminine order. It is these things which redeem love from the commonplace character universally ascribed to it in our more prosy and utilitarian times. This occurred in the fifth century before the Christian era. Concerning this feat of the antique Naxos (who, however, got no good by his audacious evening devotion to swimming) the bard of Ireland, Tom Moore has the sweetest, memento accessible in the English language. We will give a couple of verses from memory.

"The night-wind is howling with mournful sigh,  
There gleameth no light in the misty sky,  
No star over Helio's sea;  
Still, still there is shining one love-kindled light  
To guide through the darkness the gloom of the night,  
To lead me, sweet Hero, to thee."

Thus saying he plunged in the rolling stream,  
Still fixing his eye on that distant beam  
No eye—save a lover's—could see—  
And still as the waves rolled over his head  
"To-night," he said, tenderly, "living or dead,  
Sweet Hero, I'll rest with thee."

So far Moore. As for Leander he sleeps or swims between Sestos and Abydos, and he has furnished an inexhaustible theme for all poets of every age and of every clime. Baudelaire, the gay, jolly Parisian poet, has a fine piece on the same subject.

**CONIOLANUS.**—The great calamity at Erith occurred on Sunday, the 1st of October, 1864. It was caused by the explosion of 1,000 barrels of gunpowder containing 100lbs. each. The buildings of Messrs. Hall were blown

to dust and the embankment in front thrown with great violence into the Thames. The explosion was heard and felt at Charing Cross, a distance of fifteen miles. Five men were known to have been killed on the spot, five others were missing, presumably killed, and three died after removal to the hospital; the seriously injured amounted to twelve. The coroner's jury returned a verdict of accidental death.

**BACHELOR.**—Usually worn on the left hand, but not uniformly. It is, therefore, not certain what may be denoted by the ring in question.

**INRY R.**—1. It can certainly be taken a second time, but that fortunately is not a usual occurrence. The like remark applies to small-pox, notwithstanding the deceptive trash talked by the advocates of vaccination. If you will consult the life of Jenner, the originator of vaccination (written by his own son) you will find that he inoculated human beings with lymph taken from swine. Vaccination entails more evils than it can possibly guard against. 2. Any chemist would supply you with an innocuous colouring matter.

**AMATEUR.**—Photography was first known in the year 1780, and a considerable trade was carried on by Mr. Boulton of Soho Square, in 1781. Mr. Wedgewood made several discoveries in the art, and Mr. Fox Talbot succeeded in fixing the pictures in 1834. Daguerrotype was invented in 1839, and Mr. Talbot patented what was called Talbotype in the same year. A farther patent was granted to him in 1841. But it was not until 1850, however, that the collodion process was introduced. An American named Mr. Price invented photographing on wood in 1856. Our present Photographic Society was established in 1853.

## MY COMMISSION.

It is an act of Faith  
In this cold-hearted clime  
To choose a fan, my friend,  
While yet 'tis winter time.

For waving meadow grass  
And apple-blossom bough  
Are only things remembered  
Like lovely visions now.

The reaper hoes and brown,  
Amid his golden sheaves,  
The panting house dog laid  
Beneath the dusty leaves;

The maiden robed in white,  
The harfoot boy asleep,  
The laughing brook ashine,  
Where minnows glide and leap;

The drone of bee and field,  
The rose leaf's ruddy gleam,  
Through this ice-smitten air,  
All idle visions seem.

How can I prove them true,  
How trust their safe return,  
If, only taught by sight,  
Faith's teaching I should spurn?

And so, to buy your fan  
This icy, bleak December,  
It needs to trust, in truth,  
As well as to remember.

To trust—oh, promise sweet—  
His seed-time sure for ever;  
June's harvest in his hand,  
Beyond this wintry weather.

E. L.

**EVA**, dark hair, blue eyes, and considered good looking. Respondent must be a sailor, tall and handsome.

**WILLIAM S.**, twenty, tall, dark complexion, black hair and eyes, and a farmer. Respondent must be fair, good tempered, and domesticated.

**POLLY B.**, twenty-five, fair, medium height: Respondent must be about her own age, tall, dark, of a loving disposition; a policeman preferred.

**SARAH B.**, eighteen, dark brown hair and eyes, medium height. Respondent must be about thirty, tall, fair, of a loving disposition, fond of home and children; a soldier preferred.

**P. C. L.**, twenty-eight, a domestic, rather short, dark complexion, dark hair and eyes, and would make an affectionate wife.

**ETHEL**, nineteen, medium height, brown hair, blue eyes, loving, and considered pretty. Respondent must be tall, dark, fond of home and affectionate.

**MARY H.**, middle height, dark, loving, and would make a good wife. Respondent must be tall, dark; a musician preferred.

**CAROLINE G.**, twenty-six, dark, and very pretty. Respondent must be tall, dark, and fond of home; a mechanic preferred.

**L. M.**, twenty-one, rather tall, dark complexion, loving, and a domestic servant. Respondent must be tall, handsome, and of a loving disposition.

**FANNY F.**, nineteen, medium height, fair complexion, loving, and a housemaid. Respondent must be tall, dark, fond of home, and of a loving disposition.

**SARAH**, fair, medium height, light auburn hair, pretty, and fond of music. Respondent must be tall, fair, and affectionate.

**TILLY**, tall, fair, considered handsome, and fond of music. Respondent must be tall, dark, handsome, and in a good position.

**SELINA C.**, twenty, tall, fair hair, blue eyes, and domesticated. Respondent must be of a loving disposition, steady, and fond of home.

**JEMIMA**, sixteen, tall, fair, pretty, light hair, blue eyes, loving, and with a little money. Respondent must be fair, loving, and fond of home.

**TOM**, twenty-one, dark, good looking, and of a loving disposition. Respondent must be well educated, pretty, and fond of the drama.

**EDWARD**, twenty-three, considered handsome, and loving. Respondent must be about eighteen, pretty, and domesticated.

**ROSE YARN JACK**, twenty-three, 5ft. 6in., brown hair, blue eyes, fair complexion, and of a loving disposition, and holder an honourable position in the Royal Navy.

Respondent must be good-looking, domesticated and loving.

**CHARLES S.**, twenty, medium height, fair, and of retired habits. Respondent must be about nineteen, fair complexion, loving, and musical.

**MINNIE J.**, twenty-five, tall, fair, considered a good figure, in a small business, and has an income. Respondent must be dark, and fond of home.

**GEOFFREY S.**, twenty-three, medium height, dark hair, hazel eyes, good tempered, and fond of home, wishes to correspond with a young lady about his own age, and well educated.

**ALICE**, twenty-one, medium height, light-brown hair, dark-blue eyes, and of a loving disposition, and good tempered. Respondent must be tall, dark, about twenty, and loving.

**E. L.**, eighteen, medium height, dark hair, gray eyes, good tempered, and musical. Respondent must be about twenty, tall, dark, loving, and fond of home; a clerk preferred.

**JOHN G. H.**, twenty, dark-brown hair, black eyes, handsome, loving, and fond of home. Respondent must be about eighteen, tall, dark, pretty, and of a loving disposition.

**TOM G.**, twenty-two, tall, fair, curly hair, blue eyes, of a loving disposition, in a profession, and has good prospects. Respondent must be about eighteen or nineteen, loving, of medium height, fair, pretty, well educated, and musical.

**ALICE AND BEATRICE**, the daughters of a medical man, would like to correspond with two gentlemen in a like position. They are twenty-one years of age, medium height, and affectionate. Alice, dark hair and eyes; Beatrice, fair hair and blue eyes; brothers or friends preferred.

**KATE L.**, nineteen, medium height, brown hair, blue eyes, pretty, musical and domesticated. Respondent must be tall, dark, loving, and fond of home; a tradesman's son preferred.

**LILLIAN L.**, seventeen, rather tall, brown hair and eyes; domesticated, and of a loving disposition. Respondent must be tall, dark, loving, and a tradesman's son preferred.

**HENRY A.**, twenty, dark, medium height, handsome, and respectfully connected. Respondent must be about nineteen, of a loving disposition, and thoroughly domesticated.

**NELLIE R.**, twenty, medium height, fair, loving, and domesticated. Respondent must be about twenty-three, dark complexion, blue eyes, and fond of home; a mechanic preferred.

**JOE T.**, nineteen, tall, dark-brown hair, fair complexion, blue eyes, wishes to correspond with a young lady about eighteen, loving, steady, and thoroughly domesticated.

**JAMES**, twenty-one, 5ft. 4in., fair complexion, brown hair, hazel eyes, of an affectionate disposition, and fond of home. Respondent must be about his own age, good tempered, and domesticated.

**COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:**

**CARRIE** by—"H. T.," twenty-one, 5ft. 8in., dark hair and eyes, and a working man.

**HOWARD** is responded to by—"Nellie," sixteen, dark, and of a loving disposition.

**CHARLES** (Sheffield) by—"Emmie," twenty-one, fair, good tempered, merry, and would make a loving little wife.

**O. D. V.** by—"Annie," a widow without encumbrance, good looking, and in possession of a little money.

**JACK'S MY HEART** by—"S. L.," a domestic servant, eighteen, medium height, brown hair, blue eyes, and considered handsome.

**ALFRED D.** by—"A. M. A.," twenty, tall, fair, blue eyes, and a housemaid.

**W. T. G.** by—"Annie Kent," who answers to the description stated.

**A. B. C.** by—"Nellie," nineteen, tall, fair, loving, and domesticated.

**J. W. H.** by—"B. L. Ellis," who meets all his requirements, and by—"Lydia B.," twenty-one, a widow, dark, and domesticated.

**MAT** by—"B. B. B.," tall, dark, handsome, of a highly respectable family, and in a good position.

**STUART T.** by—"Jack's Alcott," twenty-three, tall, loving, and fond of home and children; he has also good prospects.

**ALFRED D.** by—"Charlotte," twenty-one, a housemaid, tall and fair, dark blue eyes, of a loving disposition, and fond of children.

**HERCULES** by—"Rebecca R.," twenty, dark hair and eyes, and domesticated.

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